Mariia Telegina

CEREMONIAL REPRESENTATION IN CROSS-CONFESSIONAL DIPLOMACY: THE OTTOMAN EMBASSY OF A CHRISTIAN AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW IN 1621

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

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(Russia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

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of the Master of Arts degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

I, the undersigned, **Mariia Telegina**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

This study focuses on a largely unexplored topic, the inter-imperial and cross-confessional diplomacy between the non-Western powers, the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy. It explores the role of religion in Christian-Muslim diplomatic encounters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the perspective of symbolic communication.

Using the case study of the 1621 embassy of the Ottoman Greek diplomat Thomas Kantakouzenos, I demonstrate that in the context of Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial that came to put a greater emphasis on the religious divide between the foreign diplomats, the Christian intermediary provided the sultan with an opportunity to project his imperial authority through symbolic tools of a Christian court. At the same time, drawing on the assets of his religious and political identity, he was capable of intervening in prestige politics of both courts.

This work also examines the role of global religio-political trends in shaping the notion of Muscovite and Ottoman otherness through the lens of diplomatic culture.

Table of contents

Introduction

The recent agenda in the history of imperial formations is deconstructing, or decentering, the European optics that still dominate much of contemporary theory and research. [1] Methodologically, it implies moving "toward a shared analytical space for forms of rule not predicated on a West versus the Rest dichotomy."[2] This study offers a new context in which to engage with this decentering agenda by exploring non-Western imperial experiences in the sphere of diplomacy. The Ottoman Empire and Muscovy have not yet been brought together to move beyond the culturalist explanations of their profoundly "non-European" diplomatic culture, based on "barbarous" customs and traditions.[3] Such an image, based on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century descriptions of the Ottoman and Russian courts, underlining their cultural "otherness," presents them as outsiders on all accounts.[4]

In his study on the Qing imperial ceremonies of guest ritual in the context of Sino-British diplomacy, James Hevia suggests to "cease interpreting these encounters as between civilizations or cultures, but as between two imperial formations, each with universalistic pretentions and complex metaphysical systems to buttress such claims." [5] Taking this approach allows to situate this study within a recent surge of work on the subject of empire,

[1] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 2000).

[2] Anna Laura Stoler, "Considerations on Imperial Comparisons", in *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*, ed. I. Gerasimov, J. Kusber, A. Semyonov (Leiden, Boston, 2009), 39-40.

[3] For the Ottoman Empire, see Daniel Goffman, "Negotiating with the Renaissance State: The Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy," in *Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. by Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2007), 61–74; Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, "Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 93-105. For Russia, see Jan Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe. Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648–1725*(Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2016), 25-63.

[4] Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: The "East" in European Identity Formation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 52.

[5] James Louis Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 25.

inspired by what might be termed the "imperial turn" in contemporary world affairs.[6] Scholars argue that we need to distinguish between empire as a "category of analysis" and as a "category of practice" to avoid the uncritical translation of politically charged, negative or positive, deployments of "empire" into the language of research.[7] They focus not so much on the question of whether a certain political unit is "really" an empire but rather on various instances of an "imperial situation," that is, a set of patterns that can be observed in various degrees of evidence in various political and cultural formations.[8] Drawing on these insights, the current research aims at generating a dialogue between two currently vibrant fields, new imperial and new diplomatic histories by focusing on a largely unexplored topic of symbolic communication between the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy.[9]

An imperial court served as a space in which the notion of a universal empire could be presented to elites, foreign representatives, and the inhabitants of the capital.[10]Therefore, examining Muscovite-Ottoman inter-imperial interaction through the lens of ceremonial is useful for a better understanding of the idioms and genres of imperial self-expression and their exchanges between Christian and Muslim states. To conceptualize these encounters, I will draw on recent scholarship in diplomatic history which prioritizes the study of individual diplomats and rulers, personal and information networks, and princely courts.[11] Diplomatic historians show that in the context of early modern diplomacy, when "sovereignty" was

[6]Alan Mikhail and Christine Philliou, "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54/4 (2012), 721–745; Ilya Gerasimov et al., "New Imperial History and the Challenges of Empire," Gerasimov et al., eds., *Empire Speaks Out. Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3–33.

[7] Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond Identity," Theory *and Society* 29 (2000): 1-47.

[8] Ilya Gerasimov, Sergey Glebov et al, "In Search of a New Imperial History," *Ab Imperio* 1 (2005): 53.

[9] For the relevance of comparative and entangled histories of the Ottoman Empire and Russia see a special issue "Models on the Margins. Russia and the Ottoman Empire" in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 12.2 (2011).

[10] On diplomatic ritual in the context of Eurasia, see Peter Fibiger Bang, Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[11] For actor-centered diplomatic history, see, for instance, Hillard von Thiessen and Christian Windler eds., *Akteure der Aussenbeziehungen. Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010).

attached to not only rulers, but also their ambassadors, and objects that were exchanged between the courts, it is essential to analyze diplomatic gifts, ceremonial, hospitality, and other symbolic and material aspects of diplomatic culture in order to understand the process of political communication.[12]

My thesis reconstructs the Ottoman embassies to Moscow in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and looks at how the tsar positioned himself vis-a-vis the sultan in diplomatic ritual. As I argue, the sultan's authority was constitutive of the tsar's image as both the Orthodox emperor and "the white tsar" and of his position vis-a-vis Christian and Muslim sovereigns. Despite the fact that Ottoman and Muscovite religious and imperial ideologies were presumably incompatible, the tsars were struggling to confirm their "brotherly equality" with the sultans and attempted to demonstrate their equal imperial rank through diplomatic ritual. I also show that although from a western European perspective the Ottoman and other Muslim representatives were inferior actors at the Muscovite court, the foreign diplomats were in fact treated according to their political rather than religious status. The tsar competed for rank and status with both by Muslim and Christian rulers and it was essential to establish his position in political terms.

This thesis also addresses the studies of Greek community in the Ottoman Empire. By doing so, it draws on the research agenda which emphasizes that Christians were a constituent element of Ottoman society, rather than as an isolated minority community immune from broader social forces.[13] My work expands this scholarship by exploring how the Ottoman Greeks contributed to the Ottoman imperial project by providing mediation in

[12] For a recent overview of the study of early modern diplomatic history, see Tracey Sowerby, "Approaches to Early Modern Diplomacy", in *History Compass* 14, Issue 9 (2016): 441-56.
[13] Tom Papademetriou, "The Millet System Revisited," in *Render unto the Sultan—Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 19-62; Bernard Heyberger, "Eastern Christians, Islam, and the West: A Connected History," International Journal of Middle East Studies 42/03 (2010): 475-478; Molly Greene, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1453-1768* (Edinburgh UP, 2015).

cross-confessional diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy. My choice to resort in this thesis to the category of "cross-confessional" rather than "cross-cultural" diplomacy is to point to the confessional aspects of diplomatic entanglements and exchanges across the religious divide. Recent studies on cross-confessional diplomacy in the late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mediterranean provide a methodological framework for this endeavor and offer the insightful analytical paradigm for approaching the multiplicity of religio-political lines of differentiation that affected early modern diplomacy.[14] This work will show that intermediaries in the Mediterranean and in Muscovite-Ottoman context were operating in a rather different environment in terms of the organization of trade and diplomacy, but their "trans-imperial trajectories" were similarly affected by the atmosphere of heightened imperial and confessional polarization.[15] Therefore, I will consider both global and local religio-political trends in examining the strategies of mediation and self-fashioning of Ottoman Greeks in Muscovite-Ottoman context.

Another novelty of this work is its focus on a specific form of mediation in cross-confessional diplomacy – the Ottoman Greeks' representation of the sultan's imperial authority in face-to-face encounters with the Muscovite rulers. Examining these encounters through the lens of diplomatic ritual allows to discern the role of religion in shaping the communication between the negotiating parties. I reconstruct the embassies of the Ottoman Greek ambassadors to Moscow in the first half of the sixteenth century and the embassy of Thomas Kantakouzenos in 1621 and show that the political rather than religious identity of the diplomats was important in the sixteenth-century environment of the Muscovite court. However, in the context of Muscovite dyarchy between the tsar and the patriarch, diplomatic ceremonial came to put a greater emphasis on the religious divide between the foreign

[14] Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, "Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy".
[15] On the notion of trans-imperial subjects see E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U.P., 2011), 11.

diplomats. The religious status of the Ottoman Greek intermediary was instrumental in the articulation of the sultan's imperial prestige to the Christian sovereigns. The emphasis of the diplomat on the significance of his in-betweenness for mediating relations between the sovereigns makes this case comparable to the strategies of other intermediaries in cross-confessional diplomacy. Yet the nature of Muscovite-Ottoman symbolic communication, which was shaped to a large degree by the material culture, determined a particular form of the diplomat's mediation – the regulation of imperial prestige of both sovereigns by the means of commodities.

The current work is divided into three chapters, with the first two presenting the terms and ceremonial procedures in which the tsar and the sultan engaged in symbolic communication, and the third focusing on the contribution of the Ottoman Greeks to this process.

The first chapter demonstrates that although the tsar projected his authority through the symbols and languages of power that were confronting the sultan, he did not himself oppose the religio-political authority of the sultan.

The second chapter examines the terms and procedures through which the tsar communicated his claims to imperial status to the sultan's representatives. It shows that as the tsar styled himself as a universal ruler, the ceremonies were similar to those at other imperial courts. Yet the material logic was more important in articulating the tsar's authority to the Ottoman diplomats. It also argues that since the Muscovite court appeared to be a locus of European discourse on Ottoman inferiority it was considered an important Christian court for establishing the sovereign's prestige.

The third chapter looks at the impact of Ottoman Greek mediation between the empires. It first discusses a series of embassies of Ottoman Crimean princes in the first half of the

sixteenth century and shows that as there were no ceremonial divisions between Christians and Muslims at the Muscovite court at this period, the religious status of the sultan's representative was almost irrelevant for the conduct of diplomatic ritual. It also highlights the opportunities that the Muscovite court provided the Greeks for mediation.

Next, it contextualizes the preparation of the 1621 embassy of Kantakouzenos and illustrates the cross-confessional elaboration of this mission. I focus here on a particular form of mediation provided to the Ottomans by the Patriarch of Constantinople in correspondence with the Muscovites that allowed to prevent the loss of Osman II's prestige in cross-confessional diplomacy.

The case study of the 1621 embassy, serves as an "imperial situation" defined by the tensions, that makes empire more visible and helps understand the languages of its self-expression.[16] I look at the "tensions of empire" by focusing on how the Ottoman Christian diplomat articulated the sultan's authority in the context of Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial that came to put a greater emphasis on the religious divide between the foreign diplomats. I demonstrate that the Ottoman Greek intermediary provided the sultan with an opportunity to articulate his imperial authority to Christian sovereigns and to exploit the symbolic tools of a Christian court. At the same time, drawing on the assets of his religious and political identity Kantakouzenos was capable of intervening in prestige politics of both courts.

To reconstruct the diplomatic encounters between the sovereigns, I will draw primarily on the archival material at the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (RGADA), the ambassadorial books (*posol'skie knigi*) and the accounts of diplomats (*stateinye spiski*),

[16] Ed. Il'ya Gerasimov et al., "New Imperial History and the Challenges of Empire," *Empire Speaks Out. Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*ed. Il'ya Gerasimov et.al, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 25.

which formed an important part of the *posol'skie knigi* for the Ottoman Empire.[17] The introduction of the comprehensive corpus of documents in the Russian archives will contribute to the cultural study of Ottoman diplomatic practice which is not well-documented for this period.

[17] For an overview of the sources on the Ottoman Empire at RGADA see [N. M. Rogozhin] Н.М.Рогожин, "The Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries in the Documents of the Ambassadorial office (Posol'skii Prikaz)," *Turcica* 30 (1998): 373-81.

Chapter 1 - Muscovite Imperial Self-fashioning

This chapter examines the tsar's construction of his image as the Orthodox emperor and the "white tsar" and the role of the sultan's authority in this process. It also considers how the tsars determined their relationship vis-a-vis other sovereigns and assessed their position in the hierarchy of sovereigns.

The conquest of Constantinople in 1453 sparked not only Ottoman but also Russian imperial project, preparing the way for the emergence of Muscovites as the champions of Orthodoxy.[18] Yet the process of turning a Russian prince into an Orthodox emperor was a long one. As Michael Angold notes, it required a talented theorist who would rationalize existing developments through the clever fusion of Byzantine ritual and political ideology with Russian myth-making, who appeared in a shape of Makarii, metropolitan of Moscow (1542-63).[19] The Muscovite imperial ideas received their most dramatic and unprecedented expression in Ivan IV's coronation as tsar in 1547, arranged by Makarii. This ceremony made clear that the new tsar and the Church conceived Muscovy as a "New Israel," with Moscow as a New Jerusalem.[20] It also explained that the tsar was not usurping the role of a Byzantine emperor, but following an ancient Russian tradition.[21] Serving as an instrument in the tool box of invented tradition, the *Stepennaia kniga* traced the succession of emperors from Alexander the Great through the Romans and Byzantines until at last arriving at Ivan and his empire, Muscovy.[22] Throughout his reign, Ivan IV traveled on pilgrimages to the holy sites of

[18] Michael Angold, *The Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans: Context and Consequences*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 124.
[19] Ibid., 139.
[20] Daniel Rowland, "Did Muscovite Literary Ideology Place Limits on the Power of the Tsar (1540s 1660s)?" The Russian Review 49 (1990): 125-55; and Rowland, "Moscow – The Third Rome or The New Israel?" The Russian Review 55 (1996): 596-614.
[21] Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1300 – 1613*, (London: Longman, 1987), 137.
[22] Romaniello, "The Façade of Order: Claiming Imperial Space," 195.

Orthodox Russia. These became public exhibitions of his authority over Muscovite territory, making visible his connection with Orthodoxy.[23]

Ivan's military success further justified his role as a defender of faith.[24] The conquest of Kazan in 1552, the first Orthodox victory against an Islamic state since the fall of Constantinople, and subsequent expansion of Muscovy, reinforced the concept of Muscovy as a holy kingdom. The tsar's resulting charismatic authority became an enduring feature of Muscovite political culture, which made visible his connection with Orthodoxy.[25] From this time on, the ideological divide between Moscow and the Muslim world would become more pronounced in the Muscovite self-fashioning, and the issues would be articulated more frequently in terms of religious differences.[26]

The new spirit of the increasingly self-conscious Orthodox Muscovy, forcefully expressed by the triumphant tsar, coincided with the increased inter-imperial and inter-confessional rivalry in Europe and the Middle East in the sixteenth century.[27] The rise to prominence of the confessionally informed political discourse had fuelled the representations of the "Turk" as a religio-political entity diametrically opposite to the religious, cultural and political identity of the Habsburgs and other European powers in the seventeenth century.[28] These discourses had a significant impact on the tsar's self-fashioning in relation to Christian sovereigns and the sultan.

[23] Nancy Kollman, "Pilgrimage, Procession and Symbolic Space in Sixteen-Century Russian Politics," in *Medieval Russian Culture*, vol.2, edited by Michael S. Flier and Daniel Rowland, 164-81. (Berkley, CA, 1994), 164-81.
[24] Matthew P. Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire: Kazan and the Creation of Russia 1552-1671* (Madison, WI, 2012), 195.
[25] Romaniello, "The Façade of Order: Claiming Imperial Space in Early Modern Russia" in *The Limits of Empire: European Imperial Formations in Early Modern World History*, edited by Tonio Andrade and William Reger, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 183-97.
[26] Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier. The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800*. (Bloomington–Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2002), 103.
[27] Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the. Early Modern Ottoman Empire*(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[28] Carina Johnson, "Imperial Succession and Mirrors of Tyranny in the Houses of Habsburg and Osman," in *Representing Imperial. Rivalry in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, eds. Barbara Fuchs and Emily Weissbourd, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2015), 94.

In his study on Russian-European diplomacy, Jan Hennings shows that religion was a common tie that united the tsar and Western sovereigns and opposed them to the sultan, notwithstanding the discourse on Muscovite "barbarity."[29] For instance, one of the accounts on the political order of early modern Europe explains a relatively high political standing of the tsar in a hierarchy of Christian monarchs by the fact that the tsar established "*Imperium Despoticum*" over his subjects that invested him with unlimited and uncontested power. At the same time, this account aligns the tsar with other European rulers as opposed to the Ottoman sultan.[30] This alignment of all Christians against the Turk thus affected the interpretation of Muscovite "Oriental despotism." In 1594 Peter Cedollini sent a very long "Oration on the Defense against the Turks" to Clement VIII where he identified princes who could be enlisted by the papacy for a crusade against the Turks.[31] He singles out the Muscovite ruler whom, according to Cedollini, "the Grand Turk fear more than any other Christian prince." He explains that "the Muscovite prince alone of all princes, save the Ottoman sultan, has absolute power over his subjects."[32] The actual reason for this explanation was Muscovy's supposed military force of 200,000 well-armed cavalrymen ready for war, its artillery, and a large number of arquebusiers. In such a way, the account shows that the lack of an institution of autocracy, which was responsible for military mobilization, undermined the capacity of Christian kings to counter the Turkish peril, andin this context the difference between the Muscovite "Oriental" and European political systems was not represented as the inferiority of the former. As Iver Neumann notes, a "despotic Christian ruler" was an oxymoron for the West, and "one that the period preferred to leave in peace instead of resolving."[33] Considering that the authority of the tsar at western European

[29] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe,* 48.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Zdenko Zlatar, *Our Kingdom Come: The Counter-Reformation, the Republic of Dubrovnik, and the Liberation of the Balkan Slavs.*(Sydney: Sydney Studies, 1993), 241-43.
[32] Ibid., 241.
[33] Neumann, *Uses of the Other*, 73.

courts was enhanced by aligning him with Christian kings and opposing to the "Great Turk," the scourge of Christendom, it is important to acknowledge the significant impact that the "age of confessionalization and empire building" had on Muscovite imperial self-fashioning.

However, Ivan's assumption of the title of tsar marked his entrance into the struggle for a place in the hierarchies of both Christian and Muslim rulers. The coronation and conquests of Kazan and Astrakhan were an equally unambiguous challenge to the status of the Crimean khan as the sole heir to the Golden Horde.[34] In the steppe, only those with claims to Chinggisid lineage could become khans. Therefore, Ivan IV's appropriation of this title demonstrated to both Christian and Muslim powers that Moscow was now the New Jerusalem and the New Saray, and its ruler was at one at the same time the sovereign of all Christians and the "white tsar," a title reserved for the heirs of the Golden Horde.

While the proclamation of a religious victory against Islam portended a glorious future for Orthodoxy and for the Muscovite ruler, the tsar's policies were necessarily constrained by the issue of religion, and the Muscovite ruler kept "one eye on the Ottoman sultan and another on the rapidly growing number of Muslims in his own domain."[35] Hand in hand with the conquests went announcements to the sultan of the tsar's good intentions for his new Muslim subjects.[36] The Ottoman-Crimean Astrakhan campaign of 1569, although unsuccessful, demonstrated that Ivan's assurances that he conquered the Volga khanates merely to ensure their loyalty did not satisfy Selim II.[37] This conflict over "Muslim" territories and control over the route to Mecca represented the tsar as a Christian ruler challenging the sultan's image as protector of Muslims worldwide.[38] Similar to the sultan and heirs of the Horde, the tsar was employing the shared practices demonstrating his imperial

[34] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, 40.
[35] Ibid., 114.
[36] Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire*, 37.
[37] Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, 117.
[38] Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire*, 67.

ambitions to dominate the vast steppe area extending from the Black Sea to Central Asia. Both Ottomans and Muscovites could not claim Chinggisid descent, but the title of khan figured prominently in their documents, solemn inscriptions, and most notably the official monogram (*tughra*) that served to legitimize documents on behalf of the rulers.[39] The sovereigns attempted to legitimize their claims to the status of khan providing protection to members of the Chinggisid dynasty.[40] In these and other ways, the tsar articulated a potent ideological claim to rulership that should have opposed him to the sultan.

Nevertheless, the diplomatic practice highlights that despite the fact that Ottoman and Muscovite religious and imperial ideologies were presumably incompatible, the tsars were struggling to confirm their "brotherly equality" with the sultans. The Muscovite envoys to the Porte insisted that the sultan refer in writing to the tsar as a brother "because the tsar was the brother of the Roman Emperor, Maximilian, and of other rulers."[41] The same diplomatic tool was used by the tsar in his relations with Christian rulers. Conscious of Muscovy's spectacular rise, the tsar attempted to reinforce his claim to status of Orthodox emperor by redefining whom he considered "brothers" among Christian sovereigns.[42] From 1558 Ivan IV began to deny the kings of Denmark the title of "brother," a few years later he started a violent quarrel with Erik XIV of Sweden, claiming that "the Holy Roman Emperor and other great sovereigns are our brothers but it is impossible to call you a brother because the

[39] For the Ottoman case: Bang and Kolodziejczyk, *Universal Empire*, ch.7; for Muscovy and Russia: E.A. Rezvan,"The Qur'an and Its World: West-Östlichen Divans (the Qur'an in Russia)"*Manuscripta Orientalia: International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research* 5 (1999): 32-62.

[40] For Russia: Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier*, 107; for the Ottoman Empire: Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty; Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400-1800*(London, New York: Continuum, 2008), 73.

[41] *Sbornik imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (hereafter cited *SIRIO*), vol. 95, p.116.The tsar's ambassadors to Istanbul were instructed to discourage the Ottomans to offer them agreements against the Holy Roman Emperor.

[42] [L.A. Iuzefovich] Л.А.Юзефович, *Путь посла: русский посольский обычай. Обиход. Этикет. Церемониал. Конец XV-первая половина XVII в.* [The ambassador's path: Russian ambassadorial custom. Practice. Etiquette. Ceremonial. The end of the fifteenth – first half of the seventeenth centuries] (St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbaha, 2007), 19-22.

Swedish land is lower in honor than those states."[43] By the 1570s, Ivan had become unwilling to regard any rulers as his equals except the Ottoman sultan and the Holy Roman Emperor. Although Ivan's interlocutors were not easily convinced by his arguments, the employment of the same diplomatic tool in relations with both Muslim and Christian states shows that the tsars were competing for a place in a universal hierarchy, in which social and political position of the ruler was often more important than religion, ethnicity or his cultural background.

While the "brotherhood" between the tsars and other rulers was constantly renegotiated, the tsar's styling themselves on a par with the sultan and the Holy Roman Emperor served as the basis for his image-making as both the Orthodox emperor and the "white tsar." Although the Muscovite ruler projected his authority through the symbols and languages of power that were shared among the participants of the struggle for East European Empire and Eurasian steppe, he did not confront the religio-political authorities of the sultan and the Holy Roman Emperor. Establishing and assessing his position in political terms, the tsar "competed for the symbolic resources of rank and status in a political space"[44] that was shared by Muslim and Christian sovereigns.

In the context of diplomacy, religion also served as a shared language to project the notion of equality between the tsar and the sultan as powerful temporal rulers and religious figureheads, while at the same time showing their different religious status. By visualizing and textualizing this divine equality before God and God's law in diplomatic correspondence with the sultan, the Muscovite court framed the sovereigns' names and their territorial titles in the two gold-painted circles located symmetrically under the third circle, symbolizing

[43][Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Путь посла* [The ambassador's path], 19.
[44] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe,* 236.

God's realm.[45] While the sultan (caliph) and the Orthodox emperor as sacral rulers and as protectors of Muslims and of the Orthodox, respectively, are traditionally represented as a key element of the two empires' competition, the Muscovite perspective on this manifestation of religious difference in royal correspondence is perhaps better understood within the context of diplomatic rituals which will be discussed in the next chapter.

By extending the decentering agenda to Muscovy it emerges that its imperial experiences were not exceptional, unique or abnormal but quite paradigmatic of the practices and self-fashioning of other empires. Similar to other rulers who brought new territories under their control and established rule over diverse geographies and peoples, the Muscovite tsar gradually adopted an imperial identity and began to assert a universalist ideology. In order to enter a league of both Christian and Muslim universal rulers in the sixteenth century, he had to articulate his claims to equal status with them in a shared conceptual language which implied "modular" imperial borrowings[46] and resulted in seemingly incompatible images of the Orthodox emperor and the "white tsar."As scholars of empire argue, the imperial languages of expression were neither unique nor universal, and this holds true for Muscovy, which fashioned, modulated and strategically employed its language of power, often with great flexibility.[47]

[45] [G.K.Kotoshikhin] Г.К. Котошихин, *О России в царствование Алексея Михайловича* [Russia in the Reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich], ed. Marshall Poe, transl. Benjamin Uroff (Berlin, Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, 2014), 61. For published letters from the tsar to the sultan in 1515 and 1670, see [Moscow-Istanbul: The History of Relations in the Archival Documents] *Arşiv Belgeleriyle Moskova-İstanbul İlişkileri Tarihi* (Istanbul: Seçil Ofset, 2015), 40-41, 163.
[46] Stoler, "Considerations on Imperial Comparisons," 46.
[47] Bang and Kolodziejczyk, *Universal Empire*, 25.

Chapter 2 - Muscovite Imperial Practice: Diplomatic Receptions for Ottoman Ambassadors

This chapter examines how the tsar was fashioning himself as the Orthodox emperor and claiming "brotherly equality" with the sultan by focusing on reception ceremonies for Ottoman embassies in Muscovy. To understand how these claims manifested themselves in physical space, this chapter conceptualizes the ceremonial of diplomatic receptions as a spatial progression of the ambassador from the border of the state to the audience with the tsar and investigates which symbolic means were used at different stages of ceremonial.[48] It shows that although from a western European perspective the Ottoman and other Muslim representatives were inferior actors at the Muscovite court, the foreign diplomats were in fact treated according to their political rather than religious status.

The spatial sequence of ceremonial receptions started with the transition of an Ottoman embassy from the Ottoman fortress of Azov to the lands of the Don Cossacks.[49] In this frontier zone between empires, the image of unlimited control that both sovereigns had over their territories, and their capacity to provide protection to their representatives, were constantly challenged. Safe passage through Crimea and the Don steppe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was by no means guaranteed: it depended on the current political situation in the borderlands. For instance, in 1624, an Ottoman ambassador was sent to Moscow secretly to bypass the Crimean khan, which reflects the broader political tensions in Ottoman-Crimean relations.[50] In 1637, the confrontation between the Don Cossacks and the

[48] I take this approach from [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Путь посла* [The ambassador's path]
[49] On the organization of Russian-Ottoman diplomacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see [E. I. Zabelin] Е.И.Забелин, "Русские посольские путешествия в Турцию в XVII столетии" [Russian embassies to Turkey in the seventeenth century] *Russkaia Starina* 9 (1877): 1- 34; [N. A. Smirnov] Н. А. Смирнов, *Россия и Турция в XVI-XVII вв* [Russia and Turkey in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] in 2 vol. (Moscow: Moscow State University Press, 1946), vol.1, 33-36; Victor Taki, "At the Threshold of Felicity" in *Tsar and Sultan: Russian Encounters with the Ottoman Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 17-51.
[50] RGADA, f. 89, op.1, 1627 d.1, 1: 298; RGADA, f. 89, op.1, d.4, 51-51ob.

Ottomans resulted in the murder of the sultan's ambassador by the Cossacks. This highly volatile environment had a significant impact on diplomatic practice. For example, in 1593, because of the unresolved conflict between the Cossacks and the Ottomans, a thousand cavalrymen from Muscovy's provinces were employed to meet Ottoman and Russian embassies at the border.[51] In this case, the presence of a large greeting party served more than the usual military honor accorded to diplomats. It ensured adequate protection of the sovereigns' subjects, which was the prerequisite for diplomatic communication between the rulers. Regulating the Cossacks' service was problematic for the Russian court, but during periods of relative peace at the border Ottoman ambassadors were honorably greeted near the Don with muskets and cannon fire, and provided with food, horses, and accommodation.[52]Afterwards, the chief ataman and a guard of a hundred cossacks brought the Ottomans to the border town of Voronezh, where they received the first official greeting by the tsar's court officials, the *pristavy*.

A number and social rank of *pristavy* assigned to a foreign ambassador reflected the place of the state he represented in the Muscovite foreign policy.[53]To decide who should meet the first Ottoman ambassador to Muscovy in 1514, the Prince of Mangup Kamal,[54] Grand Duke Vasilii III called a state council, the Boiar Duma. The boiars assigned two *pristavy* to the honorable prince, one of them being a member of the Riurik dynasty.[55]The number of court officials assigned to Ottoman ambassadors, and their social status remained the same in the sixteenth and seventeen centuries, reflecting a high level of prestige accorded

[51] RGADA, f. 89, op.1, d. 4, ll. 12-13.
[52] RGADA, f. 89, op.1, 1631, d. 2, l. 104.
[53][D.V.Liseitsev], "Российский посольский обычай в начале XVII века по материалам делопроизводства Посольского приказа" [Russian ambassadorial custom in the beginning of the seventeenth century on the basis of the documents of the ambassadorial chancellery], *Issledovania po istochnikovedeniy istorii Rossii* (Moscow: RAN, 2004), 221.
[54]Kamal was a prince of a former Theodoro-Mangup, the Orthodox Christian principality of the Crimea that became the administrative center of the region after the Ottoman conquest of Crimea in 1475. His embassy will be discussed in the third chapter.
[55]Prince Fedor Pronsky. *SIRIO*, 95, p. 95.

to the sultan, but the greeting ritual itself was modified. In the first half of the sixteenth century, Ottoman embassies were met on behalf of the tsar, in the same way as other foreign missions, but later the initial reception at the border was given to them on behalf of the local officials, either by the governor (*voevoda*) of Ryazan or byan *okol'nichii*, who belonged to the second highest rank in the state council.[56] This ritual came to accentuate the various stages through which the ambassadors had to progress to reach the capital, at the entrance of which they were eventually granted the tsar's salutation. The hierarchy of greeting ceremonies was perhaps adopted to mirror the Ottoman diplomatic procedure, where the governors of Azov and Caffa were the first to meet Russian ambassadors on their way to Istanbul.[57]

The functions of *pristavy* coincided partially with those of *çavuşlar* assigned to foreign ambassadors at the Ottoman court.[58] They escorted the foreign visitors to the capital and provided accommodation, transport and food to members of the embassy, merchants and captives, who often went from Istanbul together. As Maria Arel highlights in her study about the tsar's hospitality, "the tsar footed the bill for the entire duration of any envoy's visit to Russia, lodging, transport and diet included, all carefully orchestrated by the *posol'skii prikaz* in Moscow."[59] Scholars have often explained the tsar's hospitality as a part of "almost exclusively religious presentation of the tsar," with the ritual of generosity expressing one of the principles of the good Christian tsar.[60] Drawing on the findings of diplomatic historians, it

[56] For instance, ambassadors in 1514 (*SIRIO*, 95, p. 92) and in 1532 (RGADA, f. 89, op.1, d. 1, l. 211) were met on behalf of the tsar. From *okol'nichii*: RGADA, f. 89, op.1, d. 3, l. 260.
[57] Забелин [Zabelin], "Русские посольские путешествия" [Russian embassies to Turkey], 20-25.
[58] This office was in fact translated as *pristav* in Russian ambassadorial reports, for example, "*pristav* Suleyman *çavuş", RGADA*, f. 89, op.1, d. 3, l. 32.
[59] Maria Salomon Arel, "Hospitality at the Hands of the Muscovite Tsar: The Welcoming of Foreign Envoys in Early Modern Russia," *The Court Historian* 21 (2016):28.
[60] Paul Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671–1725*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 21.

is useful to conceptualize the tsar's hospitality as a part of a broader imperial discourse.[61] Hevia argues that what he calls imperial bestowal of food and lodgings was one of the necessary conditions for the inclusion of foreign ambassadors into the imperial domain.[62] The scale and generosity of bestowal served to magnify the emperor's position as patron and protector, while all others were placed in a position of dependency by their reliance on his hospitality.[63] This "logic of encompassment and inclusion which simultaneously maintains difference" helps explain the tsar's provisioning of diplomatic dignitaries of all types and ranks—be they ambassadors or messengers bearing royal letters or greetings—and a variety of the tsar's bestowals of food and drink (*korm podennyi*, *priezdnoi*, *pochestnoi*), which were used to establish hierarchies of prestige among the foreign guests.[64]At the Sublime Porte and Moscow, all noble members of the mission would dine with the ruler's officials sitting according to their rank.[65] Although European ambassadors to Istanbul and Moscow often did not enjoy the food offered to them, it would have been a diplomatic affront to refuse it, showing that they reject the symbolic message of the audience meal.[66]Muscovite rulers articulated their claims to imperial status vis-a-vis the sultan, drawing on a shared image of a sovereign as a "great distributor", the "source of all material nourishment" for all who inhabited his realm, subjects and foreigners alike.[67] The argument that Ottoman ambassadors "were fed for as long as they were in Moscow, and also on their progress thereto, and back to the sovereign's border" was one of the key instruments in the struggle for the equal treatment

[61] Arel, "Hospitality," [Iuzefovich], Юзефович, *Путь посла* [The ambassador's path], [N. M. Rogozhin] Н.М.Рогожин, *У государевых дел быть указано…* [In the service of the sovereign] (Moscow: RAGS, 2002), 67-69.
[62] Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar,* 124.
[63] Ibid., 127.
[64] Arel, "Hospitality at the Hands of the Muscovite Tsar," 28.
[65] Ibid., Arel, "Hospitality"
[66] Harriet Rudolph, "The Material Culture of Diplomacy: The Impact of Objects on the Dynamics of Habsburg-Ottoman Negotiations at the Sublime Porte (1530– 1650)." In *Politische Kommunikation zwischen Imperien. Der diplomatische Aktionsraum. Südost- und Osteuropa* ed. by Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Harriet Rudolph and Christian Steppan (Innsbruck, 2013) 221; Zagorodnaia I., "English Diplomats at the Court of the Tsars," in O.Dmitrieva and N.Abramova eds., *Britannia & Muscovy: English Silver at the Court of the Tsars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 189.
[67] See Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1991); Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*.

of Russian ambassadors at other courts.[68] The confirmation of such claims at the Ottoman court would express a particular honor to the tsar, because foreign diplomats were usually provisioned only from only the day of their first audience with the sultan until the day of their farewell audience. The Russian embassy of 1630, when the expenses of the tsar's ambassadors for their food, accommodation, and transport in Istanbul were eventually compensated after six months of disputes with the *kaymakam* Recep Pasha, served as a precedent for the next embassy to Istanbul.[69] Importantly, the rhetoric of reciprocity was also invoked by the sultan's ambassadors. For instance, Ahmed Aga and Ahmed *çavuş* petitioned the tsar in 1624 to replace the surplus of their *korm* with cash, stating that Sultan Mustafa I had previously accepted the same request of a Russian ambassador.[70]This petition reveals that the concept of reciprocity was not only recognized by the courts, but also exploited by representatives of both sovereigns for their own benefit.

The distribution of provision by the *pristavy* was thus one of the most important procedures during the journey to the capital, which allowed to symbolically include the members of the Ottoman embassy to the tsar's realm and allocate ranks among them. Apart from caring for the diplomats during the journey, the *pristavy* were responsible for maintaining communication between them and the court so that a proper reception could be arranged for the guests in Moscow. Through interpreters (*tolmachi*), they inquired about the aim of the embassy, its members and their offerings, and forwarded this information to the capital with a courier. If the Ottoman and Russian ambassadors were dispatched from Istanbul together, the latter were ordered to arrive in Moscow before the foreign guests in order to report about the details of their treatment at the Ottoman court.[71] This practice, among other things, allowed to project the principles of reciprocity and equality through

[68] [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Путь посла* [The ambassador's path], 110.
[69] RGADA, f.89, op.1., 1630, d.3, ll. 143, 157; RGADA, f.89, op.1.,1632, d.3, ll. 112-13.
[70] RGADA, f.89, op.1., 1624 d.1, l.15.
[71] For instance, RGADA, f.89, op.1.,d.3, l. 181.

ritual in a more nuanced way, including the staff and objects involved in the reception ceremony. It was also important to update the court about the current Ottoman foreign policy for the preparation of diplomatic negotiations in Moscow. While collecting the information about the sultan's relations with other rulers, the *pristavy* responded to counter-questions with speeches written for them by the ambassadorial chancellery. They were usually prescribed to inform the Ottoman diplomats about the tsar's relations with European monarchs, but not with the Safavid shah and the khan of Bukhara. In case they were asked regarding the latter, they had to answer that the tsar maintained only commercial relations with them.[72]While receptions of Ottoman diplomats were displayed to foreign visitors residing in Moscow, the encounters between the Ottomans and Safavids were avoided. In 1591, when the ambassadors from the Safavid shah arrived, the sultan's envoys had to stay in their residence for the entire duration of their visit to Moscow.[73] The spatial separation of Safavid and Ottoman representatives was conditioned by the fact that the Muscovite government maintained diplomatic relations with both sovereigns and attempted to navigate through their rivalry. Hence, diplomats from these two Muslim powers were treated differently from diplomats of Christian states due to political considerations.

On arrival at the outskirts of Moscow, the *pristavy* accommodated the embassy in private houses where they stayed while waiting for permission to enter the capital. Since the greeting was held on behalf of the tsar, only official representatives of the sultan were accorded it. The mixed diplomatic-commercial composition of the Ottoman embassies posed particular challenges to this principle. In 1615, when the head of the embassy, Ali Bey, died during the journey to the capital, the *d'iaki* of the ambassadorial chancellery became concerned with the rank of the second Ottoman representative, Veli Bey.[74] As his diplomatic

[72] RGADA, f.89, op.1,,d. 5, ll. 26-28.
[73] [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 79.
[74] RGADA, f.89, op.1,,d. 4, ll. 22-23.

status was confirmed only by his retinue,represented mainly by merchants, the greeting ceremony at the entrance to Moscow was not arranged for the embassy, but the tsar accepted the ambassadorial groupto receive the sultan's letter.

The details of the ceremony were made more concrete during the diplomats' public arrivals and entrances into the city as they were not aimed solely at visitors, but also the inhabitants of the city, and foreign guests. From a "double shooting distance" from the city wall, the ambassadors were met by the groom who led the horses from the tsar's stables.[75] At a "shooting distance," two new *pristavy,* who replaced the "peripheral" commissaries, greeted the diplomats through a *tolmach* and passed on speeches from the tsar. They were accompanied by the parade of armed *strel'tsy*, a military honor for official visitors, and a greeting party of *deti boiarskie,* members of the stables chancellery and representatives from other chancelleries.[76] The actual number of people in the greeting party varied according to the diplomat's status, which also determined the number of people in the ambassadorial train on the day of the audience with the tsar.

For the Muscovites, it was essential that foreign observers witnessed these solemn entries and reported to their monarchs that the sultans continued to send ambassadors to pay homage to the tsar. One of the most famous European visitors to Muscovy, Adam Olearius, described the "great pomp" of the Ottoman ambassador's entrance to Moscow in 1636, who was met by sixteen thousand cavalrymen.[77] He informs that the diplomat was also aware of the European witnesses and looked "intently" at the foreign group of fifty riders, headed by the Swedish marshal.[78] The information provided by Olearius is revealing about the aspects of Muscovite-Ottoman encounters that were of concern for western European observers.

[75] RGADA, f.89, op.1.,d.4, l. 83.
[76] RGADA, f.89, op.1.,1631, d. 2, l. 281.
[77] Adam Olearius, *Travels of Olearius in Seventeenth-century Russia*, trans. and ed. Samuel H. Baron (Stanford , CA: Stanford University Press, 1967): 70-72.
[78] Olearius, *Travels of Olearius*, 71.

Apart from the impressive parade, Olearius records the number of official greeters (two *pristavy*), the distance at which the parties met (only quarter of a league from the city), and the quality of the horses involved in the ceremony (the stately Arabian steed of the Ottoman ambassador, and the Muscovites' finely groomed Persian, Polish, and German horses with silver chains). The account also describes the details of a precedence struggle between the Muscovites and the Ottomans. According to Olearius, the tsar's officials remained on their horses until the ambassador dismounted, while the Ottomans responded to them with keeping on "their turbans, as in the custom in their country" when the *pristavy* doffed their hats speaking in the tsar's name.[79] Then the officials speedily remounted, but the ambassador, who supposedly had been given a very tall and spirited horse with a high Russian saddle, succeeded to mount his horse only after it had kicked at him several times. Such a testimony is instructive about the political and cultural discourses that informed Olearius' interpretation of the prestige struggle during the ceremony.[80] The emphasis on cultural difference between the participants is perhaps most revealing about Olearius's assessment of the Ottomans. Although he saw both Muscovites and Turks as "barbarous other," the latter, who used the practices of Muslim courts, in his view were more distant from Europeans.[81] By depicting the Ottoman customs as culturally different from Muscovite and European, Olearius also raises the issue of religious difference and its role in court ceremonial, which will be more explicit in his interpretation of Muscovite ritual, allegedly separating Muslims from Christians. It is also important that Olearius ascribes the attempt to humiliate the ambassador to the Muscovites who intentionally provided him with a spirited horse, which contrasts to the general context of reception. Given the tremendous influence of the accounts produced by

[79] Ibid.
[80] Claudia Garnier, "Das Ringen um Rang und Ehre: Ritualpraxis am Moskauer Hof aus der Perspektive westlischer Gesandter," *Interkulturelle Ritualpraxis in der Vormoderne: diplomatische Interaktion an den östlichen Grenzen der Fürstengesellschaft* ed. Claudia Garnier, Christine Vogel (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2016), 41-70. On Olearius, 55-56.
[81] On the notions of Russian and Turkish otherness and barbarity, see Neumann, *Uses of the Other*, 39 - 74.

Olearius and other western travelers and diplomats to Muscovy on European perceptions of Muscovite rituals and culture, this perspective should be taken seriously since it shaped political discourse. Yet the way that Muscovites organized their relations with Muslim polities in practice was different from such interpretations. What was relevant to a western audience was one thing, but what was constitutive of Muscovite-Ottoman communication was quite another.

An important element of symbolic communication between the courts were horses provided for the ambassadors' public performances at the capitals.[82] The horse breeds for the European diplomats could vary, but the Ottomans usually received the most expensive Arabian show-horses, *argamaki.*[83] These horses were a status symbol and a luxury item in Eastern Europe and Eurasian steppe, and served as a symbolic commodity in the struggle for prestige between Russian, Crimean and Polish diplomats in Istanbul. Providing *argamaki* to Ottoman diplomats enabled the Russian court to request the same token of honor for the tsar's ambassadors in Istanbul.[84]

Another difference in the treatment of European and Ottoman ambassadors during the greeting ceremony was a form of salutation. *Pristavy* shook hands with Christian diplomats (*vitanie*) and had *koroshevanie* with Muslim diplomats. The exact meaning of theIslamic ritual *koroshevanie* (from the Turkic verb *görüş* – "to see each other, to have an audience") is obscure, but most likely it referred to clasping hands or touching shoulders as if it were a kind

[82] On horses as status symbols in the Ottoman empire, see Suraiya Faroqhi, "Horses Owned by Ottoman Officials and Notables: Means of Transportation but also Sources of Pride and Joy," in *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Istanbul: Eren, 2010), 293-311; Alan Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press), 155-57.

[83] Ann M. Kleimova, "Good Breeding, Muscovite Style: "Horse Culture" in Early Modern Rus," in Gustave Alef ed., *Beiträge zur 7. Internationalen Konferenz zur Geschichte des Kiever und des Moskauer Reiches*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 199-239; idem, "Cultural Convergence: The Equine Connection between Muscovy and Europe," in Karen Raber, Treva J. Tucker eds., *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004): 46-49.

[84] RGADA, *f.89, op.1,* 3 (1592 -1594), l. 25; 1628 d.1., l. 19.

of embrace.[85] Usually only persons of equal rank could have such forms of greeting, for example, Muslim ambassadors and Muscovite officials. The adoption of this ceremony was of vital political significance in the context of Moscow's struggle for the legacy of the Golden Horde. At the Crimean and Nogai courts, Russian ambassadors insisted to be greeted with *koroshevanie* by the princes and other representatives of the Chingisid dynasty.[86] Crimean khan Sahib Giray wrote to grand prince Vasilii III in 1525: "If you want to harass me as you do with Kazan, and want to make other mischiefs, (I warn you that) we (my people) are not of the sort who cannot respect ourselves (*koroshevatisia*)." [87] The *koroshevanie* of the Kazan and Nogai khans with Ivan IV in the 1530-50s was a clear political message to the Crimean khan, demonstrating the khans' confirmation of Moscow's authority as a New Saray and the legitimacy of Ivan's claims to the status of the "white tsar," a title that was reserved for the heirs of the Golden Horde.[88] This ritual was a crucial diplomatic tool in the context of sixteenth-century Eurasian steppe politics, but the Muscovite rulers also used it in receptions of Ottoman and Safavid embassies. Boris Godunov, who greeted the representatives of the sultan and shah with *koroshevanie* during his regency, ceased to do so after his coronation in 1598, displaying his newly acquired sovereign authority.[89] However, this practice was rarely employed beyond the space of the Russian court, and if it was, it communicated a different political message, as evident from its application in seventeenth-century Istanbul. In 1630, Russian ambassadors were instructed to meet the grand admiral Hasan Pasha at his residence or galley and greet him with *koroshevanie*.[90] Since the audience was not held at the sultan's palace, this ritual served to

[85] [Il'ia Zaicev] Илья Зайцев, "Notes on the Golden Horde Diplomatic Ceremonial: The Origin of the Word Koreš in Russian Slang,"*Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58 (2005): 295–98.
[86] [S. M. Solov'ev],С.М.Соловьев, *История России с древнейших времен* [A history of Russia from ancient times], vol. 3 (Moscow: Sotsekgiz, 1960), 231.
[87][Zaicev] Зайцев, "Notes on the Golden Horde Diplomatic Ceremonial," 296.
[88] Ibid., [Solov'ev] Соловьев, *История России*, 413.
[89] RGADA, f.89, op.1.,d.3, l.185; [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 117.
[90] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.2, l. 21ob.

demonstrate the tsar's personal favor to the admiral, which was also supported by rich gifts presented to him by the ambassadors. It is clear, that the function of *koroshevanie,* which had been a part of Muscovite diplomacy from the fifteenth century onwards, was transformed through Muscovy's relations with different Muslim polities. Yet it retained its meaning as a greeting between Muslims and Christians of equal social status. Consequently, it implied the mutual recognition of equality between representatives of different religious traditions, and thus *koroshevanie* has not been symbolically emphasized as an opposite to a "Christian" form of greeting, *vitanie*, in diplomatic receptions. Importantly, this symmetrical ritual was used by the Muscovites in their relations with all Muslim polities in contrast to other practices that were mainly intended for Tatar Muslim interlocutors.

After the salutations, the ambassadorial train proceeded towards the diplomatic residence. Until the erection of the ambassadorial court on Il'inka in 1634, there were no fixed buildings that served as lodgings for diplomats. Only Poland-Lithuania, the Crimean and Nogai khanates had their own courts (*dvory*). Embassies from Christian polities could have been housed in the Lithuaninan *dvor*, as was the case with the Swedish and English missions in 1609 and 1614, but the Tatar accommodations were usually not assigned to them.[91] The Lithuanian, and in a later period English, *dvory* were situated in Kitai-Gorod, a central district immediately adjacent to the Kremlin.[92] In contrast, the housings for Crimean and Nogai representatives were built on the outskirts of the city in a district of the Zamoskvorech'e, near the Muslim quarter (*Tatarskaia sloboda*) and a local mosque.[93] The difference in the proximity of the lodgings to the tsar's residence served to distribute honor among the ambassadors and their masters. For instance, the Swedish embassy of Johan III,

[91] [Liseitsev] Лисейцев, "Российский посольский обычай" [Russian ambassadorial custom], 225.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Zaicev, "Где останавливались крымские послы в Москве и московские послы при дворе крымского хана в XVI в.?"[Where did Crimean ambassadors stay in Moscow and Muscovite ambassadors at the court of the Crimean khan in the sixteenth centuries?] *Crimean Historical Review* 2 (2016), 35-51.

one of the key rivals of Ivan IV, was demoted by having to stay in the Nogai *dvor* in 1570.[94] A similar practice, although to a limited degree, was used to indicate the tsar's favor to the Crimean khans. In these cases, the Tatars were accommodated not in the Lithuaninan *dvor*, but in private houses that were closer to the Kremlin, but still within the suburban areas of the White City.[95]

This spatial logic preferring "Christian" over "Muslim" diplomats, was not applied in the Ottoman case. As Kotoshikhin's account outlines, when ambassadors "from the Turks" came to Moscow, they were "received and honored in the same way as ambassadors from the Holy Roman Emperor, or from the kings of Poland or England or Denmark," or "as the Persians and the Swedish.[96] In the context of diplomatic accommodation, the equal status between the Ottoman and European diplomats representing Christian sovereigns was expressed in granting them equal spatial proximity to the tsar. Consequently, contrary to their Muslim peers, the sultan's representatives stayed in the "Christian" quarters, that occupied central spaces on Il'inka Street. Some of these lodgings, belonging to Muscovite courtiers, bishops and monasteries, were special houses intended specifically for envoys of various ranks, while others were transformed into an ambassadorial accommodation immediately before the arrivals of diplomats.[97] In 1515 and 1593, the Ottoman diplomats were housed in private *dvory* in Kitai-Gorod, and in the Lithuanian *dvor* in 1532.[98] In the seventeenth century, they were accommodated in the residences of the metropolitan of Novgorod[99] and of the archbishop of Ryazan',[100] which also served as an ambassadorial housing for Eastern

[94] [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 74.
[95] Ibid.,75; [Liseitsev] Лисейцев, "Российский посольский обычай," [Russian ambassadorial custom], 225.
[96] Kotoshikhin, *On Russia*, 89.
[97] Arel, "Hospitality at the Hands of the Muscovite Tsar," 29; [Liseitsev] Лисейцев, "Российский посольский обычай," [Russian ambassadorial custom], 225.
[98] In 1515: *SIRIO* 95, p. 95; in 1532: RGADA, f.89, op.1., d. 1, l. 33; in 1593: RGADA, f.89, op.1.,d 3 , l. 263.
[99] In 1614: RGADA, f.89, op.1.,1614 d.1. l. 272.
[100] RGADA, f.89, op.1.,d. 4, l.67.

Orthodox metropolitans in other years.[101] Olearius also mentions that the members of the 1634 Ottoman embassy were escorted to a recently rebuilt ambassadorial court on Il'inka, and their residence was so near the Swedish quarter that one could see into the Turk's courtyard. [102] Granting Ottoman diplomats the same quality of lodgings as to Christian ambassadors was not considered to be a contradiction by the Muscovite court. Their sovereigns were compared to each other on the account of their political standing, and it would be incompatible with the sultan's status to assign the remote Tatar *dvor* for his representatives. In this context, the distribution of honor by allocating the Tatar "Muslim" and Lithuanian "Christian" courts to diplomats from other states was also determined by their political rather than religious identity.

The ceremonial greeting on the day of the embassy's arrival was concluded with the tsar's bestowal of food, drink, and tablewear, which was usually doubled (*korm priezdnoi* together with *podennyi korm*), all items accorded to the ranks of the foreign guests. [103] Several days later, the diplomats were invited to a public audience with the tsar.

Accessing the Tsar

As has been pointed out by Daniel Rowland in his study of Muscovite architecture, the spatial principles of the Topkapı and Kremlin palaces had a number of striking similarities, as well as the language of ceremonial, "the glue" that held these spaces together.[104] Examining diplomatic receptions in Istanbul, Michael Talbot deduces three stages that the ambassador had to pass to be granted access to the sultan.[105] These stages reinforced the bonds of the superior-inferior relationship by requiring participation in the displays of the ruler's power

[101] [Liseitsev] Лисейцев, "Российский посольский обычай," [Russian ambassadorial custom], 225.
[102] Olearius, *Travels of Olearius,* 71-72.
[103] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, ll. 85-91.
[104] Rowland, "Architecture, Image, and Ritual", 60.
[105] Michael Talbot, "Accessing the Shadow of God: Spatial and Performative Ceremonial at the Ottoman Court," in Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks, *The Key to Power?: The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 103-24.

and hospitality. A similar spatial logic structured Muscovite ceremonial which aimed at communicating the tsar's claims to imperial authority primarily to Muscovy's immediate rivals, Poland-Lithuania and the successor khanates to the Golden Horde.

As in the Ottoman case, the first level, permitting the visit to the palace, obliged the ambassadors to participate in a procession for the benefit of the monarch. On the day of their reception, they were collected from their temporal residence by two *pristavy* and *tolmach* with the greeting party, consisting of *deti boiarskie* and the grooms.[106] Members of the embassy were provided with horses and transport according to their rank (carriage or sledge depending on the season) from the tsar, and the ambassadorial group started its route towards the palace.[107] Similar to diplomatic processions in Istanbul, headed by the ushers and *çavuşlar,* carrying diplomatic gifts, the Ottoman ambassadorial trains in Moscow were led to the palace by *strel'tsy* with the royal gifts.[108] Although the sultan's gifts were rather modest, if at all present, they were demonstrated to the population of Moscow and its foreign guests as a confirmation of the sultan's deference to the tsar. In order to create the maximum impression with the scale and abundance of gifts, the ambassadorial chancellery sought specifically to increase the number of participants in this part of the procession. They carried not only the royal gifts, but also the personal gifts of the diplomats and merchants. The cortege passed through the Posad to Red Square along a corridor of armed *strel'tsy,* who lined up from the diplomat's residence to the palace.[109] They were accompanied by a row of people standing in a set order representing various ranks of Muscovite society rising in status from low to high as the diplomat and his retinue were approaching the palace.[110] Europeans

[106] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, l. 92.
[107] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1631, d. 2, l. 279. On types of horses accorded to different ranks, see Kleimova, "Good Breeding, Muscovite Style"
[108] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, l. 92.
[109] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.3, l. 270ob.; RGADA, f.89, op.1,1631, d. 2, l. 281.
[110] Hennings,"Diplomacy, Culture and Space: the Muscovite Court," in Beyond Scylla and Charybdis. European Courts and Court Residences outside Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon Territories 1500-1700, ed. B. B. Johannsen & K. A. Ottenheym (Odense: National Museum of Denmark, University of Southern Denmark Press, 2015), 60.

were frequently surprised by the silence displayed by the *strel'tsy* and other Muscovite officials participating in the ceremony.[111] As I. E. Zabelin writes in his study of Muscovite court life, "*stol'niki*, *striapchie*, nobles, *d'iaki* in golden kaftans and high hats have been standing motionless along the stairs and porches, not responding to greetings of the guests and representing a human decoration of the tsar's chambers."[112] Such descriptions echo the contemporary characterizations of janissaries, who, according to one western observer, were standing like a "palisade of statues" during the ambassadorial receptions at Topkapı.[113] This custom was communicating an image of the "absolute" power of the rulers, permitting them to reduce their own subjects to lifeless objects.[114] In both Ottoman and Muscovite ceremonial processions, the sovereigns demonstrated their power, wealth and hospitality to the foreign ambassador and his master as well as to their own subjects by providing splendidly adorned horses, transport and the protection of the guard.

Having passed Red Square and entered the Kremlin through the main gate, the ambassadors dismounted and left their carriages. The spot from which they progressed toward the palace on foot was a significant element in the procession, as this distance determined the honor bestowed on the diplomat. The smaller the distance, the greater the honor he received.[115] Representatives of Tatar Muslim polities were usually forced to stop in front of the Archangel Cathedral, in a longer distance to the residence.[116] For the Ottomans, however, this took place by the gates of the tsar's treasury, opposite the central column in the facade of the building then set between the Annunciation and Archangel Cathedrals. The

[111] [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 148.
[112] [I.E.Zabelin] И.Е.Забелин, *Домашний быт русских царей в XVI и XVII столетиях* [Home life of the Russian tsars in the sixteenth and seventeen centuries] (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 265.
[113] Philippe du Fresne-Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant, de Venise a Constantinople* ... (1573), cited in Rudolph, "The Material Culture," 217.
[114] Ibid., 216-17
[115] Hennings,"Diplomacy, Culture and Space," 60.
[116] J. B. Kyndakbaeva, "Приезд в Москву калмыцких посланников в XVII веке" [Arrivals of the Kalmyk diplomats to Moscow in the seventeenth century] in ed. A.K. Levykin, *Иноземцы в России в XV-XVII веках* [Foreigners in Russia in the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries] (Moscow: Drevlehranilishe, 2006), 520-33.

point where the diplomatic dignitaries dismounted also determined their ranks. The members of the ambassador's retinue were obliged to dismount at the gates of the tsar's treasury, while the head of the Ottoman mission could continue on horseback until the treasury's second buttress. [117]

This space thus served a function similar to that of the "Gate of Salutation" at Topkapı, where all visiting dignitaries were obliged to dismount and continue on foot. They marked the proximity of the guests to what Clifford Geeretz called the "glowing centers" of the palace complexes, where the symbolic action was especially densely concentrated.[118] On dismounting, foreign ambassadors in Istanbul were permitted to enter the second court of Topkapı, the ceremonial heart of the Ottoman Empire, leading to the "Gate of Felicity", in front of which the sultan sat on his throne during the main religious festivals and his accession. At this ceremonial stage the ambassadors were treated to spectacles demonstrating the military might, wealth and bounty of the Ottoman Empire: the parade and feeding of the janissaries, and examination of the coins for quality and quantity for their pay.[119]This was followed by a reception by all viziers present in the Divan and included a ceremonial meal that served to display Ottoman hospitality and reinforce the superior-inferior relationship.[120] Within the Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial, the parade of cavalrymen and the sovereign's bestowal of food was featured earlier. Hence, the foreign visitors proceeded to the final condition for access to the ruler.

In Istanbul, the ceremony aimed to place the ambassador, and by association his sovereign, in his place within the Ottoman worldview, as the representative of a polity subject

[117] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1631, d. 2, l. 279.
[118] Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in Sean Wilentz ed., *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 13-38; Rowland, "Architecture, Image, and Ritual", 58.
[119] Talbot, "Accessing the Shadow of God," 114-16.
[120] Ibid.

to the universal Ottoman monarchy. This was achieved first by presenting the ambassador and his retinue with robes of honor, *hilat*, and then by forcing them to conform to the conventions of court ceremonial, which involved some potentially problematic forms.[121] Offering robes of honor represented a well-established custom at the Russian court as well. For example, the autobiography of the ambassador Sigismund von Herberstein, who participated in numerous diplomatic missions in the sixteenth century, depicts the clothing that he had received from the tsar, the sultan, and other rulers.[122] However, there were significant differences between the Ottoman ritual of *hilat* distribution and the distribution of dress (*plat'e*) or coat (*shyba*) in Muscovite palace ceremonial. As recent scholarship on Ottoman diplomatic ritual demonstrates, because basically all foreign envoys were obliged to wear a robe at the audience with the sultan, such a garment did not represent a tributary status of a particular state but signified the sultan's hospitality toward foreign envoys and his ability to offer protection, to establish orders of rank and to distribute prestige amongst diplomats at the Sublime Porte.[123] In a similar way, the Muscovites perceived the Ottoman *hilat* as a ranking device, with diplomats carefully recording the quantity and quality of the robes they received from the sultan. For instance, in 1628 the tsar's ambassadors were accompanied at the Chamber of Petitions by the Ottoman dignitaries, master of ceremonies Huseyin *çavuş* and Ottoman Greek diplomat Thomas Kantakouzenos.[124] The Russian report gives the robes' monetary value of all participants, with twelve and fifteen rubles for two robes of the ambassadors, and five or six rubles for the *hilats* of the Ottoman representatives and the Russian *tolmach*. The fact that the precise number as well as the cost of each distributed

[121] Talbot, "Accessing the Shadow of God,"119.
[122] Amelia Peck, Amy Bogansky, Joyce Denney, Interwoven *Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 76.
[123] Among recent studies, see Talbot, "Accessing the Shadow of God," 238; Gábor Kármán, "Sovereignty and Representation: Tributary States in the Seventeenth-century Diplomatic System of the Ottoman Empire," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Gábor Kármán, Lovro Kunčević eds., (Leiden: Brill,2013), 155-85; Rudolph, "Material Culture".
[124] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1630, d. 3, l. 230.

garment were recorded with such precision and financial accounting, demonstrates that these items of dress carried a profound meaning both for both sides. Importantly, the Russian account confirms the universality of the *hilat* distribution ceremony which allowed for the simultaneous process of inclusion into the imperial realm and ranking of foreign Christian diplomats and members of the Ottoman court alike.

In Muscovy, the sovereign's bestowal of ceremonial dress was also being observed as the process by which foreign embassies were evaluated, differentiated, and included into the tsar's realm. But contrary to the universal Ottoman robing ceremony, the scope of actors exposed to this custom in Moscow was limited to diplomats from the Crimean, Nogai and Kalmyk khanates from the second half of the sixteenth century.[125] The Russian court distributed these ceremonial garments as a part of the tsar's greeting *zhalovanie*, requiring that the ambassadors and their retinue wore the robes presented to them at every public audience.[126] If there were no funds or materials in the tsar's treasury to provide all members of the embassy with them, the audience at the palace could be cancelled.[127] Hence, targeting mainly the rulers of the neighboring khanates, Muscovite robes of honor were imperial commodities of their own kind, materializing the tsar's claim to supreme lordship in the Eurasian steppe.

The next stage of the reception ceremony brought foreign ambassadors to a religio-political center of Moscow, the Cathedral Square, constituted by two throne rooms, the Golden and Faceted Halls, with the Annunciation Cathedral between them. All the buildings were linked by a shared entrance, the Red Porch, under which there was an arched carriage-way into the inner courtyard. Three staircases led from the Cathedral Square to the porch,

[125][Kotoshikhin], *On Russia*, 89; Kyndakbaeva, "Приезд в Москву калмыцких…" [Arrivals of the Kalmyk diplomats]
[126] [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 72.
[127] Kyndakbaeva, "Приезд в Москву калмыцких .." [Arrivals of the Kalmyk diplomats], 524.

each of which had its own function.[128] At this point, the ambassadors from Christian and Muslim states were obliged to follow different ceremonial trajectories. The left-hand staircase, which ran along the parvis of the Annunciation Cathedral was reserved for the diplomats of Christian powers to go up into the palace. But the Ottoman diplomats, as representatives of the Muslim polity, were not allowed to follow this route. They went around the church porch and ascended the middle ceremonial staircases directly, thus having a shorter procession to the palace than the Christians. A lesser distance to the tsar's chambers, which seemed to generate honor throughout the diplomatic ritual, however, had an opposite effect in tandem with confessional differentiation.

In order to understand its implications for the tsar's status vis-a-vis the sultan in the international arena, it is necessary to consider how this diplomatic custom was perceived by European visitors to Moscow. Olearius considered this practice as excluding Muslim representatives from the space close to the Annunciation Cathedral. Consequently, the "Christian" route was more honorable. He recorded that during the procession to the palace, he and his retinue "were conducted through an arched passageway, past a beautiful church, and into the audience hall, located on the right side of the upper square. We were conducted past the church because we are Christians. Turks, Tatars, and Persians are not brought by this way, but directly across the center of the square and up by a broad porch."[129] A Danish diplomat Gydenlove, who came to Muscovy in the mid-seventeenth century, had another opinion. According to him, following "from right to left, and then taking another stairway, again to the right" ensured that Christian diplomats had a longer and therefore a more spectacular procession than Muslims: the middle stairway, which had only nine stairs, was

[128][I. E.Zabelin], *Домашний быт русских царей в XVI и XVII столетиях* [Home life of the Russian tsars in the sixteenth and seventeen centuries] (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 76, 258; Rowland, "Architecture, Image, and Ritual", 62.
[129]Olearius, *Travels of Olearius,* 61.

used for "infidels and Turks to show these dogs the shortest way."[130]Despite the difference in their understanding of this practice, both diplomats readily acknowledged a lesser processional route as humiliating for Muslims and elevated their own status above the Turks. The notion of Christian-Muslim division is complicated by the 1575 letter of Johann Cobenzl, Maximilian II's ambassador to Muscovy. Cobenzl commented on his visit to Moscow that he could not expect a better reception even in Rome and Spain and contrasted it with the position of the Polish, Tatar, and Ottoman ambassadors at the Russian court, whom the Muscovites treated "as they deserved, that is, worse than the Turks receive our (Habsburg) ambassadors."[131] By including Christian Polish diplomats to the group of inferiors, this testimony disconnects the categories of honor and religion, but instead puts honor and politics together, which were used by the authors selectively in a way that would fit a particular context. Despite these alterations, all accounts share the same constant—the idea of Ottoman inferiority vis-a-vis western Europeans. But what was the Muscovites' vision? How did they use this practice to send out political messages?

As in the case with "Muslim" diplomatic lodgings, the middle staircase could have been used by the Russian court to intimidate Christian diplomats.[132] Importantly, the reverse practice, that would allow Muslim representatives to enter the palace via the parvis of the Annunciation Cathedral, was not used as a means to show the tsar's grace to them after the mid-sixteenth century.[133] It was only with the acquisition of the khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan and the entrance of Ivan IV' into struggle for the legacy of the Golden Horde that

[130][Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 93.
[131] A letter of Johann Cobenzl about sixteenth-century Russia (published in the Journal of the Ministry of Education no. 9 in 1842), available in Russian from http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/rus10/Kobenzel/text.phtml?id=698, last accessed 23.04.2017.
[132][Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom],146-47; Hennings, "Diplomacy, Culture and Space," 60.
[133] Ottoman representatives took the Annunciation stairs in 1514, 1522, 1532: *SIRIO*, p. 96; RGADA, f.89,op.1,d. 1, ll. 213, 333. On Crimean envoys, see [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 92. Middle staircase: 1589 RGADA, f.89, op.1,d. 3, l. 277ob.

this confessional division became an established ceremonial norm. Therefore, similar to other rituals, supposedly constructing a boundary between "Muslims" and "Christians," this practice was aimed at the representatives of the Tatar khanates and did not oppose the religio-political authority of the tsar to that of the Ottoman sultan. However, the inclusion of the tsar into the hierarchy of Christian sovereigns required, in terms of diplomatic ceremonial, a symbolic manifestation of their superiority over the sultan. Unlike the other stages of reception, a public procession to the palace was more universal in terms of bringing all foreign ambassadors into a shared physical space of the Kremlin and exposing their religious difference. But the difference does not automatically mean religious hierarchy as, for instance, the ritual of *koroshevanie* confirms. It was the spatial ambiguity of this ritual that allowed European ambassadors to interpret a "Christian" route to the tsar's chambers as more prestigious. A middle staircase, which, as Leonid Iuzefovich suggests, was used by the Tatar diplomatic representatives due to its nine stairs, appealing to Mongol numerical symbolism,[134] came to denote a space, where the Ottoman ambassadors were placed in the hierarchy of Christian courts as inferior actors. This example shows that confessional boundaries, including those that are made tangible through spatial practices, are not fixed but are both defined and suspended in the process of political, diplomatic and other interactions, and, importantly, through conflicting interpretations of these interactions by various actors. [135] From the Christian perspective, this stage of court ceremonial was functionally similar to the final stages of diplomatic reception in Istanbul in terms of confirming precedence of the tsar, as an Orthodox emperor, over Muslim rulers. Not surprisingly, "some potentially problematic forms" at the audience with the tsar also drew on the notion of religious supremacy.

[134][Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 93. For instance, Chinggis Khan's nine horse tails representing the nine tribes of the Mongols.
[135]Van Gelder and Krstic, "Introduction," 99.

A reception by all viziers present in the Divan in Istanbul was presented in Moscow via a sequence of various so-called "great" greetings from members of the court and court offices at set stops of the ambassador's route towards the ceremonial hall. Ottoman diplomats were traditionally accorded a full program of two or three meetings.[136] Taking part in each of three were the *d'iaki* of the ambassadorial chancellery and representatives of the Boiar Council of the *okol'nichii* and *boiar* ranks.[137] In the latter half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries Ottoman ambassadors were received mainly in the Gold and Faceted Halls, which were used interchangeably.[138] The majority of the sultan's diplomats were granted an audience with the ruler of Muscovy, but in some cases there were variations. In 1593, an Ottoman envoy was permitted the audience with the tsar only after having a meeting of the "duma rank" with the regent Boris Godunov.[139] This was a response to the treatment of the Russian ambassador in Istanbul, where he had been initially met by grand vizier Sinan Pasha.

Having begun on the streets of Moscow, the ceremony culminated in the tsar's chambers. At this stage, the task was to create an impression not on the people in general but specifically on the ambassador and to express through a common language of signs and gestures the tsar's attitude to him and his sovereign at that particular time. The "imperial audiences," using Hevia's concept, in Moscow and Istanbul had a shared language of expression. According to Gürlü Necipoğlu, the Ottoman court ceremonial "centered on the virtually absent ruler."[140] During the receptions of foreign ambassadors in the Chamber of

[136] Three meetings in 1514 and 1522: *SIRIO* 95 p. 96; RGADA, f.89, op.1, 2, l. 213. Two meetings in 1621, 1630, 1631. RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, l. 94ob.; RGADA, f.89, op.1,1630 d.1 l.1; RGADA, f.89, op.1,1631 d.2 l. 282.
[137] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1, l.211, RGADA, f.89, op.1, 4, l.94 ob.
[138] Golden Hall: RGADA, f.89, op.1, 4, l.94 ob. Faceted Hall: 1630, d.1 l.1; 1631, d.2, l.249. Rowland, "Two Cultures, One Throne Room: Secular Courtiers and Orthodox Culture in the Golden Hall of the Moscow Kremlin," in *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice under the Tsars* eds. Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Greene (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003), 33-57.
[139] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 3, l.267.
[140] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*; 56.

Petitions, the sultan was sitting like "an icon framed in the window".[141] The Viziers stood in a row on the left side of the room, looking downward and with crossed hands, ostentatiously displaying their non-active part in the course of the audience. In Rudolph's words, "the sultan sat like a mere object surrounded by other objects representing a sovereign who had decided not to enhance the dignity of his guests by his own presence."[142] Russian diplomats measured the degrees of honor they reaped at the audience in the Chamber of Petitions by the slightest movements of the sultan's head and his glances, which were all recorded with deliberate precision. For instance, the report of the embassy in 1628 informs that "the sultan looked at (them) intently" when the diplomats thanked him on behalf of the tsar for informing him about his health through his ambassador.[143] That the Ottomans took such gestures of respect and abasement seriously both when acting as hosts and masters of ceremonies in Istanbul and travelling abroad is evident from Ottoman imperial rescripts and diplomatic reports. Examining the account of the Kara Mehmed's reception in Vienna in 1665, Rhoads Murphey demonstrates that negotiating the terms of the ambassador's audience with the emperor carried nearly as much meaning to the Ottoman side as the precise details of the treaty. [144] How could Ottoman ambassadors assess their political standing at the audience with the tsar?

While the sultan appeared to represent a concept of rule, rather than a human being, the tsar's representation of imperial sovereignty seemed to combine both. Throughout the audience the tsar sat upon his throne in ceremonial attire and all his regalia beneath a display of icons and surrounded by *boiars*, *okol'nichie* and Muscovite nobles. On either side of the throne stood four *ryndy*, a guard of honor armed with axes. Contrary to the sultan, the tsar was not only present and visible at the audience, but also participated in the negotiations, although not directly, but through his nobles. On entering the hall, the ambassador was

[141] Ibid., 106.
[142] Rudolph, "Material Culture," 218.
[143] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1628, d.3, l. 112;
[144] Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 67-69.

introduced to the tsar. The actual presentation was the duty of the *okol'nichii*, although there were exceptions.[145] In 1522, for instance, the Ottoman ambassador was introduced by one of the two grand duke's closest advisors, Prince Mikhail Yuriev.[146] After that, Christian ambassadors kissed the tsar's hand, but Muslim representatives were not allowed this form of greeting. Instead, the tsar placed his hand on the head of a Muslim diplomat.[147] Hence, the spatial sequence of the ambassador's ceremonial progression culminated in his physical proximity to the tsar and coincided with yet another form of confessional differentiation, which was also open to interpretation.[148] Upon greeting the ambassador, the tsar questioned him, through the *okol'nichi* or *d'iak*, regarding the monarch's health. The place of the monarch in the hierarchy of sovereigns was measured by the tsar's position during this ritual. The Muscovite rulers usually rose from the throne to ask about the health of the sultans, confirming their equal sovereign status with their "brothers".[149] In 1593, the tsar only rose "slightly" from the throne, and Boris Godunov did the same when inquiring about the health of Sinan Pasha.[150] At these audiences with the tsar and the regent, the Ottoman representative was treated according to the dishonor that the Russian envoy was shown in Istanbul.[151] The question about the health was followed by the presentation of letters from the sultan and the grand vizier. At both Ottoman and Russian courts, the handing over of the letters was marked by the formalized delivery so that the rulers did not touch the letter of the foreign

[145] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1630, d.1, l.1.
[146] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1, l. 213.
[147] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 3, l. 270.
[148] Olearius states that the tsar permits only Christians, and not Turks, Persians, or Tatars, to kiss hand. He also refers to Antonio Possevino who was more concerned with the humiliating custom of the tsar's handwashing after the Catholic ambassadors kissed his hand. See Olearius, *The Travels of Olearius*, 63.
[149] In 1522: RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1, l. 213; in 1621: RGADA, f.89, op.1, 4, l.107; in 1631: RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1631, d.2, l. 285.
[150] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 3, l. 218. The same gesture was used in Muscovite-European context in 1655 at the audience with the ambassador from Oliver Cromwell to show that the head of the Commonwealth was a representative of minor power. See Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, 123.

ambassador.[152] In Moscow, the diplomat gave it to a head of the ambassadorial chancellery, the *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak*, who acted as a tsar's official representative during the audience.[153]The ambassador then proclaimed speeches from the sultan and from the grand vizier to the tsar. After this, the royal gifts were brought forward, symbols of the sultan's respect for the tsar. Each object was announced according to a list as the item was brought to the throne by the ambassador. The gifts were presented by the same *okol'nichii* who had announced the diplomats' arrival at the entrance to the reception hall. The sultan's presents usually included the gifts of satin, *atlasy*, and robes of honor, *platno*.[154] These were first received by the *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak*, who passed them on to a *d'iak* of the treasury. The royal gifts were followed by the personal gifts from the ambassador and the members of his retinue. They were taken by the *d'iak* of the treasury, excluding the tsar's official representative from the exchange and thus preventing the loss of sovereign's prestige.

The audience was concluded by a speech of the *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak* on behalf of the tsar in which he informed the ambassador that after the translation of the sultan's letter, the tsar would order his officials to arrange the negotiations. Finally, the diplomat was allowed to sit on a bench near the throne, and the *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak* announced that the tsar's *zhalovanie* of food and drinks would be delivered to the ambassador's residence. The degree of prestige was measured by the distance from the tsar: for instance, in 1514 and 1522 the sultan's diplomatic dignitaries sat "closer" to the tsar "than other ambassadors", but in a later period they usually received an average honor, sitting "as other ambassadors."[155] Prince Kamal in 1514 was accorded a particularly honorable reception, he was permitted to sit on a

[152] On the Ottoman case: Rudolph, "The Material Culture," 231; in Russia: [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 122.
[153] RGADA, f.89, op.1, 4, l. 96ob.
[154] In 1621: RGADA, f.89, op.1, vol. 4, l. 99; in 1624: RGADA, f.89, op.1, vol. 4, d.1, l.38.
[155] In 1514: *SIRIO* 95, p. 96; in 1522: RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1, l.213; in 1630: RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1630 d. 1, l.10.

bench immediately after greeting the grand duke, before presenting the letter from the sultan.[156]

After the negotiations, the ambassador was invited to a farewell audience with the tsar, which followed a similar ceremonial pattern. The personal gifts from the ambassador and his retinue were reciprocated with sable, marten and fox furs, usually worth twice the price of their gifts that was assigned to them by the tsar's treasury according to Moscow's prices. Ottoman embassies were traditionally dispatched to Istanbul together with Russian ambassadors who escorted the Ottomans to the border and delivered the tsar's salary to the Don Cossacks (*donskoi otpusk*) which ensured them a safe route to the sultan's domain.

As this chapter demonstrates, there was a significant difference between the European understanding of the position that was assigned to the Ottoman ambassadors in Moscow and the actual treatment that was granted to them by the tsar. Importantly, the fact that the Muscovite ritual appeared to be a locus of European discourse on the inferiority of Muslims shows that the tsar was taken seriously among sovereigns as "both donor of and threat to another ruler's honor."[157] Therefore, "the tsar's commitment to ritual display was a reflection of his acknowledged place in the early modern system of precedence, rather than remnants of the exotic "barbarism" mocked and dismissed by many contemporary travelers."[158] This evidence challenges the conventional view of the Muscovite court's outsider position and reveals instead that it served as an important site of confirmation or reduction of the sovereigns' prestige.

From the Muscovite perspective, the ambiguity of the ritual allowed the court to project the image of the tsar as holy defender of true Christianity to the European diplomats,

[156] *SIRIO* 95, p. 96.
[157] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, 47.
[158] Ibid., 247.

while at the same time treating the sultan's representatives according to their high political status. For the tsars, it was imperative that their claim to universal rule was understood and recognized by both Christian and Muslim ambassadors, and thus the symbolic means and procedures of diplomatic reception were in many ways similar to these at other dynastic courts.[159] Historians of Ottoman-European relations emphasize that "materiality being a quality which shaped the political logic" of Ottoman ceremonial; thus materiality was one of the key axes around which the symbolic dialogue was constructed between the tsar with the sultan.[160] From the moment that a sultan's representative entered the tsar's realm and throughout the journey to Moscow, and back, material aspects of symbolic communication shaped the interaction between the parties. Importantly, the principle of "measured" reciprocity, as Hennings also shows in the context of Russian-European diplomacy, justified the treatment of foreign diplomats in Muscovy and served to manifest equality between the sovereigns.[161]

[159] For diplomatic ceremonial in Vienna, see Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, 160-170; Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[160] Rudolph, "Material Culture," 237. Historiography on the role of gifts in Ottoman diplomacy abounds. See, for instance, Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "East is East and West is West, and Sometimes the Twain Did Meet: Diplomatic Gift Exchange in the Ottoman Empire," in ed. Colin Imber et al. *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies* (New York: Tauris, 2005), vol.2, 113-24.

[161] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, 90. Maja Jansson,"Measured Reciprocity: English Ambassadorial Gift Exchange in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *Journal of Early Modern History* 9 (2005): 348-70.

Chapter 3 – The Ottoman Greeks' Representation of the Sultan in Cross-Confessional Diplomacy

This chapter discusses the role of Greek subjects of the sultan in mediating relations between the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the light of recent scholarship on cross-confessional and inter-imperial interaction. It offers a new perspective on this issue by focusing on a particular form of diplomatic mediation, Ottoman Greeks' representation of the sultan's authority in face-to-face encounters and correspondence with the Muscovite rulers. The case studies presented are a series of embassies led to Moscow by Greeks in the first half of the sixteenth century and the mission of Thomas Kantakouzenos in 1621.

The *millet* paradigm, which presented non-Muslims under Ottoman rule as a state within a state governed by the patriarch, has long been revisited, but the exploration of the exchange of ideas, practices and structures between Christians and Muslims is an ongoing work. The history of the Kantakouzenos family illustrates the involvement of Christian subjects in various Ottoman structures, and the continuity of Istanbul Greek elites under the Ottoman rule.It was perhaps the wealthiest and most powerful family among the *archons* of the sixteenth century, the most famous and prominent of whom was Michael Kantakouzenos, also known as Son of Satan (Şeytanoğlu).[162] Michael Kantakouzenos became enormously wealthy through his activities in Ottoman finances and patriarchal politics, engineering the elevation and deposition of patriarchs. Michael's nephew Nikephoros Parasches was the leading figure in the backstage of the Patriarchate of Constantinople after 1579.[163] He cooperated with young Cyril Loukaris, a would-be Patriarch of Constantinople, during their

[162] Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*, 122-157.
[163] Vasileios Tsakiris, "Cyril Loukaris' Grand Anti-Polish Plan and The Dutch-English Policy in Eastern Europe," in *Backlighting Plots The 'Protestant' Patriarch Cyril Loukaris* ed. Viviana Nosilia and Marco Prandoni (Firenze: Firenze University Press), 45-67.

sojourn in Poland-Lithuania (1596-1597). Thomas Kantakouzenos, a protagonist of this study, built his career of a merchant-diplomat capitalizing on his connections at the Ottoman court, the Patriarchate and various networks across Eastern Europe.[164] Together with his brother Lavr, they participated in multiple missions to Muscovy, Transylvania and the Danubian principalities. In a later period, members of the Kantakouzenos family attained high positions in the service of the sultan as *voyvodes* of Wallachia and Moldavia.

This study expands the scholarship on Ottoman Greeks and provides the Muscovite perspective on their fortunes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries across and beyond the empire.

Ottoman Crimean diplomats between Moscow and Istanbul

This section discusses the embassies of the Ottoman Crimean Greeks to Muscovy in the sixteenth century and presents the evidence for the durability of Greek elites in Constantinople. It compares them to other Christian converts in the service of the Porte who relied on their trans-imperial networks.

Both within the Mediterranean and Black Sea worlds, Ottoman Greeks and other Christians benefited greatly from Ottoman expansion, but there were significant differences in the organization of trade and diplomacy in these zones of Christian-Muslim encounter. In the Mediterranean, treaties had for centuries played a fundamental role in creating an equilibrium between Muslim and Christian states which faced each other from positions of relatively equal strength.[165] This situation stands in sharp contrast to the borderlands between

[164] On Thomas and his brother, see Nicolae Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance: continuation de l' Histoire de la Vie Byzantine* (Bucharest: Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Européen, Comité National Roumain, 1971), 126; [B.N.Floria] Б.Н.Флоря, Фома Кантакузин и его роль в развитии русско-османских отношений в 20-30е гг. XVIIв. [Foma Kantakuzin and his role in Russian-Ottoman relations in the 1620s] *Rossia i Hristianskii Vostok* (Moscow: RAN, 2004), 248-87.

[165] Dominique Valérian, "The Medieval Mediterranean," in *A Companion to Mediterranean History*, ed. Peregrine Horden and Sharon Kinoshita, Blackwell Companions to Ancient History (Hoboken: NJ, 2014), 77–

Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire. As the Crimean khanate was an Ottoman vassal state and the Black Sea was an Ottoman lake since the fifteenth century, there was no need for the Sublime Porte to construct an order in the region by treating with Muscovy, with which it did not have a shared border.[166] Hence, there was no legal or institutional framework that would present Ottoman Christian intermediaries as the embodiment of tensions between the claims of religion and state sovereignty as was typical of Mediterranean diplomacy and trade. A lack of legal systems and practices made them more dependent on the knowledge of customs and norms at both courts. As Greene points out, prior to 1666, when the first Greek, Panayiotes Nikousios, was appointed to the office of imperial dragoman and thus opened the Phanariot period in the empire's history, Greek diplomats had worked as "personal servants" to the sultan.[167] Their relationship to the state was less stable as they could not rely on bureaucratic authority as their successors did. How could Ottoman Greeks secure their diplomatic careers in the sixteenth century and what were the opportunities that the Muscovite court offered to them?

It is possible to trace the careers of two Crimean Greek ambassadors to Muscovy in the sixteenth century, Kamal and Iskender. They both were princes of a former principality of Theodoro-Mangup, which was rather powerful prior to 1475, when the Christian possessions of Theodoro-Mangup and the Genoese southern coast of the Crimea were made an Ottoman *eyalet.*[168] Its princes were relatives to the rulers of Byzantium and Trapezund and thus a marriage to a princess of Mangup provided an opportunity for Orthodox rulers to buttress their imperial prestige. In 1473, Stephen the Great of Moldavia, married a princess of

90; Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[166] Victor Ostapchuk, "The human landscape of the Ottoman Black Sea in the face of the Cossack naval raids." *Oriente Moderno* 20 (2001): 23–95.

[167] Greene, *Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 116, 132.

[168] S.R. Grinevetsky, I. S. Zonn, *The Black Sea Encyclopedia* (Berlin: Springer, 2015), 205; [A.V.Vasil'ev and M.N.Avtushenko] А.В.Васильев и М.Н.Автушенко, [The mystery of the principlaity of Theodoro] *Загадка княжества Феодоро* (Moscow: Bibleks, 2005).

Mangup Maria Assanina Paleologue, which was a part of his maritime, Pontic and imperial policies.[169]In 1474, Prince Isaac of Mangup received the ambassador from Ivan III, who demanded the daughter of "the chief of the Goths" in marriage for the son of the grand duke, and the following year another embassy arrived at Mangup to ask what dowry Isaac would give his daughter.[170] But the proposed alliance was frustrated as the Ottoman forces seized Mangup, Caffa and Yenikale and made the princes prisoners. The Greek princes embraced Islam.[171]

In this light, it is possible to compare the careers of Kamal and Iskender to those of other scions of elite Byzantine families and Christian converts who entered Ottoman service in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and contributed to the internationalization of the Ottoman imperial project by providing their trans-imperial connections and enabling cross-confessional negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and Christian states.[172] In the case of the embassies of Kamal and Iskender to Muscovy, they relied on their ethnic solidarity with a Byzantine aristocrat George Trakhaniot, an Italianate Greek who came to Moscow in the entourage of Sophia Paleologue after her marriage to Ivan III in 1472.[173] He had been in the service of Sophia's father, despot of the Morea ThomasPaleologue, and served as a chief treasurer and a diplomat to Italy at the Muscovite court.[174]

[169] Norman Housley, *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century: Converging and Competing Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2017).
[170] John Buchan Telfer, *The Crimea and Transcaucasia: Being the Narrative of a Journey…*(London: H.S. King & co., 1876) 207-208.
[171] Ibid. 208; [Vasil'ev and Avtushenko] Васильев и Автушенко, [The mystery of the principality of Theodoro] *Загадка княжества Феодоро,* 273.
[172] Greene, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 22-45; Heath Lowry, "The Last Phase of Ottoman Syncretism—The Subsumption of Members of the Byzanto-Balkan Aristocracy into the Ottoman Ruling Elite," in *The Nature of Early Ottoman State* (New York: SUNY, 2003), 115-130; Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560-1600," in *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015):107-128.
[173]Angold, *The Fall of Constantinople*, 130; Croskey, "Byzantine Greeks in Late Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth-Century Russia," in *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe* ed. Lowell Clucas (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1988), 33-56.
[174] Gustav Alef, "The Origins of the Muscovite Aristocracy: The Age of Ivan III," *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 39 (1986): 7-362.

Kamal was dispatched to Moscow in 1514 with the gifts from Selim I to Vasilii III and a letter declaring "love and friendship" between the rulers.[175] To ensure that he would be granted a proper reception, Kamal sent his nephew Manuil to go on ahead of him to Moscow with a letter, written in Greek, to his "honorable brother" George Trakhaniot in which he informed him that his former name was Theodorit and asked to instruct Manuil in the customs of the Muscovite court.[176] From the records of the embassy it is clear that Trakhaniot assisted the fellow Greeks as he was participating in the arrangement of the greeting ceremonies and distribution of *korm* and *zhalovanie* to them.[177] The fact that Kamal had royal gifts with him suggests that the sultan was interested in establishing direct relations with the Muscovite ruler and sought to indicate his favor to him. In this situation, the Greek prince who could offer his connections at the host court was considered an apt candidate for acting on behalf of Selim I during the first face-to-face encounter.

The four embassies of the second Greek ambassador, Iskender, in 1521-29 testify to the fact that the Ottoman court had primarily commercial interests in mind that required mercantile rather than diplomatic skills from its representative. Iskender also employed the connection with George Trakhaniot, coming to Moscow with his brother, who was a fur merchant in Istanbul.[178] For the Muscovites, the challenge posed by Iskender's embassies came initially from the ambiguity of his social status and rank. During his first visit to Moscow, the Greek ambassador informed the court that he was a prince of Mangup. The next year Russian ambassadors reported from Istanbul that he was a *saka*, water-carrier to pashas who "did not live near the sultan," that was perceived as a marker decreasing his social status.[179] Moreover, as they learned from the grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha, for his

[175] *SIRIO* 95, p. 96.
[176] *SIRIO* 95, p. 92.
[177] *SIRIO* 95, pp. 95, 99.
[178] RGADA, f. 89, op.1, d.1, ll. 266ob.-267.
[179] RGADA, f. 89, op.1, d.1, ll. 246, 267.

second embassy Iskender would be sent only to purchase furs for the palace, although the Greek persisted that he had "speeches" from the sultan.[180] The boiars concluded that Ibrahim Pasha's statement was more trustworthy, and did not grant Iskender a greeting ceremony at the entrance to Moscow and high quality horses, but as other foreign merchants in Muscovy, he was supplied with *korm* and accommodation. Iskender then declined an invitation to a ceremonial banquet with the grand duke because he was keeping fast.[181] At the farewell audience, the same argument was employed by the Muscovite court, the Greek diplomat was informed that Vasilii III fasted and could not receive him at the palace.[182] Upon his return to Istanbul, Iskender complained that he was not provided with *pristav*, *korm* and *zhalovanie* and thus the grand duke had no respect for the sultan. Such a charge was a significant blow to the political standing of Russian diplomats in Istanbul and to the image of benevolent relations between the rulers carefully cultivated by Moscow. The Muscovite court requested that the janissaries who were dispatched with Iskender, refuted this false claim, and the royal treasury prepared the records of the diplomat's *korm* and *zhalovanie* to demonstrate that he was treated in accordance with his rank.[183]

The Ottoman court, however, sent Iskender to the duke for the fourth time, this time as an ambassador. The Muscovites had no choice but to treat him in accordance with his now diplomatic status, but attempted to uphold the prestige principles by assigning him one *pristav* instead of two.[184] During this embassy, Iskender fell ill and died, and when the *pristav* checked his documents he supposedly found his report to the sultan stating that the grand duke ordered to ring bells in celebration of the Ottoman failure at Vienna in 1529.[185] It is not clear whether the document really existed or not, but this evidence was used by the

[180] RGADA, f. 89,op.1, d.1, l. 290.
[181] RGADA, f. 89,op.1, d.1, l. 291ob.
[182] RGADA, f. 89,op.1, d,.1, l.311.
[183] RGADA, f. 89,op.1, d,.1, ll. 245, 315.
[184] RGADA, f. 89,op.1, d,.1, l. 323.
[185] RGADA, f. 89,op.1, d,.1, l. 326ob.

Muscovites two years later to accuse a scholar from Mount Athos, Maxim the Greek, of inciting the sultan against Muscovy together with his associate, Iskender.[186] Yet the political activity of the ambassador had significance only for the Muscovites. His duties were delegated by the Ottoman court to a new merchant, Ahmed, who arrived in Moscow the next year and delivered a letter expressing the sultan's gratitude for sending back Iskender's cash.[187]

These episodes show that the profiles of the Crimean intermediaries were very different,but they corresponded with different approaches of the Sublime Porte to its relations with Muscovy. Contrary to Kamal, Iskender was not appointed to represent the sultan and was not provided with royal gifts by the court. He was charged with only commercial tasks, and utilized his trans-imperial connections to bring profit both to himself and to the Ottoman court.

The Muscovite court had different expectations from its relations with the Ottomans and from Iskender. For the Muscovites, seeking to fashion themselves as an equal partner of the Ottoman Empire, it was essential that the sultan dispatched an ambassador, who would be authorized to sign a treaty between the rulers.[188] The political aspirations of the Muscovites provided Iskender with a tool to expand his personal influence at the court by emphasizing his alleged authority at Istanbul. The subsequent accusation of the Greek ambassador and monk of provisioning false information to the sultan justified the Muscovites' failed attempts at concluding a political alliance with the Sublime Porte. Hence, Iskender's association with Ottoman political power gave him authority, as the Muscovites saw it, to manipulate relations between the states and broker the grand duke's status. Encouraging these aspirations,

[186] N.N. Pokrovskii, *Судные списки Максима Грека и Исака Собаки* [The trials of Maxim the Greek and Isak Sobaka] (Moscow: RAN, 1971).
[187] RGADA, f. 89,op.1, d,.1, l. 333.
[188] *SIRIO* 95, p. 115-16.

Ottoman Greek ambassadors would be capable of collecting all bonuses available in the Muscovite realm.

The arrangement of diplomatic receptions for the Crimean diplomats confirms that there were no ceremonial divisions between Muslims and Christians at the sixteenth-century Muscovite court. All representatives of the sultan - Kamal, Ahmed and Iskender - followed the parvis of the Annunciation Cathedral to enter the palace, and the diplomats greeted the grand duke with kissing his hand.[189] In a later period, marked by the increasing role of religion in Muscovite imperial practices, this privilege would bereserved for the representatives of Christan powers.

The sixteenth-century Ottoman embassies to Moscow exemplify one of the important facets of Ottoman-Muscovite entanglements, the reliance of both governments on the Byzantine elite at an early stage of their imperial projects. Both of the Greek diplomats shared a common background with George Trakhaniot and facilitated the conduct of cross-confessional diplomacy, which shows that fifteenth-century phenomenon of ties between Christian Greeks and Greeks who had converted to Islam had an echo in the sixteenth century.[190] Similar to Christian-European converts to Islam, the princes of Mangup integrated into Ottoman structures and patterns of recruitment, but kept their familial ties and remembered their maternal language and faith.[191] However, they relied on Ottoman regime which, as Angold argues, offered more lucrative opportunities to them than Muscovite.[192]

[189] *SIRIO* 95, p.96; RGADA, f.89, op.1, 1, ll. 213ob., 333.
[190] Greene, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 63.
[191] Tobias P. Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades. Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575-1610,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 159; Gürkan, "Mediating Boundaries," 120-21.
[192] Angold, *The Fall of Constantinople*, 130.

The Patriarch of Constantinople: Preparation of the 1621 Embassy

The Greek Orthodox Church after 1453 was often treated as the sole civilizing factor in early modern south-eastern Europe operating in a hostile and corrupt Islamic milieu. In fact, it might be observed that the Greek patriarchate closely cooperated with the Porte, benefiting from its support against the Latin Church. This chapter investigated how the Ottoman court cooperated with Patriarch Loukaris in the context of a mutually beneficial military anti-Polish campaign and the role of the patriarch's mediation in securing the imperial prestige of the sultan in cross-confessional diplomacy.

The global religio-political developments in the seventeenth century provided an opportunity for Istanbul Greeks to offer their Christianness in addition to their commercial and diplomatic skills to the Ottoman court, which all happened to converge in the figure of Thomas Kantakouzenos. To understand his role in inter-imperial diplomacy it is important to take a closer look at how and why the political, economic, and religious agendas were involved in his embassy to Moscow in 1621.

The increasing relevance of Orthodox Christians to Ottoman imperial project should be contextualized within the shifting structure of the sultan's imperial power which had its roots in the final decade of the sixteenth century. The absolutist ambitions of the "rebel sultan" Osman II and his subsequent overthrow in 1622, that became the first serious Ottoman crisis, has been studied in detail by Baki Tezcan.[193] But the contribution of the Orthodox community to the new policies of the sultan and its role in enhancing the Ottoman imperial authority in the international arena have hardly been addressed.

[193] Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Osman II, who was groomed to become a sultan in the style of Mehmed the Conqueror, aimed at restoring the sultan's authority by reviving the *ghazi* mode of sovereignty based on the image of warrior-sultan - the ruler who engaged in battle with the infidels and left the palace in order to not appear "more a persona than a person" to his subjects.[194] According to Tezcan, the appointment of the admiral Ali Pasha in 1619 to the grand vizerate marked the beginning of Osman II's aggressive foreign policy and the consolidation of the court-centered absolutism.[195] Among other things, Ali Pasha's rise to power was determined by his skills in producing funds for the treasury. His fiscal policy included a greater protection of Ottoman merchants. For instance, in a legal case, unprecedented in Ottoman history, he forced Venice to pay compensation for the losses of some Ottoman merchants whose goods and monies were captured at sea. [196] The decision to make war on "the infidels," Poles and Cossacks, was also confirmed after his appointment. The military campaign, which served to reinforce the sultan's position through conquest, was supported by a new grand vizier Huseyin Pasha after the death of Ali Pasha in 1621. The initial plan was most probably meant to be much more ambitious than what it ended up being at Hotin. It involved the Protestant Bohemian nobility, Transylvania, and the conquest of two cities in Poland.

From the perspective of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Christian elites of the capital, the Ottoman campaign against the Polish king came to realize a part of a larger anti-Unionist (or anti-Polish) plan, which has been carefully designed at the diplomatic backstage of the Sublime Porte since the 1610s. In his seminal work on the activities of Patriarch Cyril Loukaris, Gunnar Hering examines the development of this enterprise, at the core of which was the envisaged alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy against

[194] Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 17.
[195] Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 132.
[196] Ibid., 134-35.

Poland.[197] A recent study by Vasileios Tsakiris places the actions of Loukaris and his circle, as well as of the other eastern European political actors involved in the anti-Polish plan, into a wider context of large-scale efforts of English, and later Dutch, diplomacy to restrict Catholic expansion towards Eastern Europe.[198] Clearly, the promotion of Muscovite-Ottoman military alliance was a product of a cross-confessional and trans-imperial cooperation of multiple actors. As early as 1611 the prince of Transylvania Gábor Báthory suggested to the Porte to send an envoy to Moscow, and the same year the Habsburg ambassador in Istanbul observed that the "Greek notables" were pushing the Ottomans toward the war with Poland.[199] Nevertheless, these ideas, circulating for almost a decade, met the political interests of the Ottoman court only in 1620 due to the ambitions of Osman II. The Loukaris's proposal to ask the Muscovites to move against Poland matched not only the sultan's foreign but also economic policy that paid great attention to the advance of Ottoman merchants abroad. The candidature of the ambassador spoke for itself: he was a member of the family famous for its commercial services provided to the court and had a previous experience as a merchant and diplomat in Muscovy.[200] The "secret" Ottoman mission and its participants were closely watched by European diplomats at Constantinople. For instance, the French ambassador Comte de Césy writes to king Louis XIII: "...the Greek patriarch of Constantinople, on a suggestion of the ambassador of Holland concerted together with certain viziers of the Porte, had sent a bishop and a nobleman from Pera on a diplomatic mission to the Muscovites."[201] From this description, it is clear that Thomas, "a nobleman from Pera," was a well-known figure in the Istanbul diplomatic community. The indication that "certain viziers of the Porte" supported the Patriarch's initiative shows the diplomat's awareness of

[197] Gunnar Hering, *Ökumenisches Patriarchat und europäische Politik 1620-1638* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1968).
[198] Tsakiris, "Cyril Loukaris'.
[199] Hering , *Ökumenisches Patriarchat,* 47.
[200] On Thomas' mission to Muscovy in 1611, see [Floria], Флоря, "Фома Кантакузин"; Tsakiris, "Cyril Loukaris"
[201] Tsakiris, "Cyril Loukaris", 50-51.

the divisions within the Ottoman court. Tezcan notes that the appointments of Ali Pasha and Huseyin Pasha to the grand vizerate were personal preferences of Osman II and as such a significant blow to the autonomy of the viziers.[202] In his letters to the Muscovites, Loukaris informs that he first approached Huseyin Pasha with the idea of the embassy and the latter promoted it to the sultan.[203] The fact that the alliance with Muscovy did not have a wide support reveals that the 1621 embassy was also a part of political tensions at the Ottoman court and demonstrates the extent of the sultan's engagement in the affair.

The cooperation between the Orthodox Church and the Ottoman court correlated to the unique epitome of church-state relations in Muscovite history, a co-rulership of tsar Mikhail Romanov with his father Patriarch Filaret from 1619 to 1633. This dyarchy and the significance of the Church as a symbol of national unity was vital to restoring the prestige of state institutions after the "Time of Troubles" (1598-1613), when civil war engulfed the land and Moscow was occupied by the Poles. The expansion of Church sovereignty or "regime of Filaret," as it was labeled by historians, found reflection in the dramatic growth of the patriarchal domain.[204] Filaret's interventions in boiar politics and contributions to state building led scholars to conclude that he was the dominant figure of the new Romanov dynasty. [205] Muscovy's new government had great interest in the alliance with the Ottomans against Poland and expressed this interest repeatedly through its ambassadors sent to Ahmed I and Mustafa I.[206] The intertwining of church-state interests was reinforced by the fact that Filaret was released from Polish captivity in 1619 with the involvement of Loukaris and was

[202] Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 137.
[203] RGADA, f.89, op.1,d.4,l. 117.
[204] John L. H. Keep, "The Regime of Filaret, 1619-1633," in *Slavonic and East European Review* 38 (1960), 334-60.
[205] For a detailed historiography on Filaret, see Georg Michels, "Power, Patronage, and Repression in the Church of Patriarch Filaret (1619-1633)" in Ludwig Steindorff ed., *Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland: Konzepte und Praktiken, Potentiale und Grenzen 14.-17. Jahrhundert, Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* 76 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 81-96.
[206] [Floria] Флоря, Фома Кантакузин [Foma Kantakuzin], 260.

consecrated as a patriarch by one of Loukaris's closest collaborators, Patriarch Theophanes of Jerusalem.[207]

This constellation of various local and international factors rendered Istanbul Greeks as useful as ever for mediating relations between the empires, and Kantakouzenos was ideally placed to offer his services to the Ottomans. The expertise that Ottoman Greeks could provide to the palace – in trade, in diplomacy, and in the linguistic skills – differed little from century to century, but both the confessional and political trends at the time made the role of Kantakouzenos's diplomatic mission very different from those performed by his predecessors in the sixteenth century.

The presentation of a "secret" proposal to the Muscovite sovereigns in diplomatic correspondence reflects a cross-confessional nature of this project. In his comparative study of espionage in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, Emrah Gürkan highlights that the Ottoman court resorted to oral communication more than European courts.[208] He also explains the difference in transmitting the information from the perspective of its practical value: "the real message was to be transmitted orally, but the correspondence served a different purpose: that of introducing the messenger and proving the authenticity of the message he was to transmit."[209] The embassy of 1621 confirms this argument, but the Muscovite political context of dyarchy provides also an opportunity to examine the role of different forms of communication in cross-confessional diplomacy. The fact that the sultan's "secret speeches" were intended for Filaret, not the tsar, demonstrates that the Ottoman court was informed by Loukaris that the patriarch was a key decision-maker.[210] Nevertheless,

[207] Tsakiris, "Cyril Loukaris," 47; Andreas Kappeler, Zenon E. Kohut, Frank E. Sysyn, et al, *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter, 1600-1945*, (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 92.
[208] Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean Go-Betweens and the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry" (Ph.D. Diss., Georgetown University, 2012), 86.
[209] Ibid., 30.
[210] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d .4, ll. 96-97ob.

Osman II and Huseyin Pasha sent their dispatches only to the tsar, but Loukaris contacted both rulers. The rhetoric of the official correspondence was also different. The sultan's and the grand vizier's letters depict Osman II as a warrior-sultan who embarks on a war to "teach the cossack and Chricassian thieves a lesson." They urge the tsar to follow his own proposal, brought forward in 1615 to Ahmed I, and to prove his "love and friendship" to his son by sending troops to attack Poland.[211] In the Loukaris's letter, the sultan is the patron of the Eastern Orthodox Church, which flourishes and enjoys freedom in the Ottoman realm. Having learned about the injustices of the Poles and the Cossacks, plundering the imperial domains and kidnapping his loyal Christian subjects, the sultan decides to avenge them. Loukaris cites the New Testament on the necessity of just punishment according to the deeds of the unjust and concludes that this campaign will benefit Orthodox Christians in both empires and contribute to "a greater friendship" between the sovereigns.[212] The image of a warrior-sultan projected by Osman II and Huseyin Pasha seems to contradict to Loukaris's religious rhetoric. However, the patriarch incited the tsar to support fellow Christians rather than the sultan by addressing the tsar's claim to the status of an Orthodox emperor. Therefore, the prestige of the sultan who did not actually need allies was secured by both versions, but the patriarch's letter hinted at how effective could be the joint "crusade" in buttressing the tsar's imperial status.

The perspectives also varied in terms of identifying the sultan's diplomatic dignitaries. Osman II's letter enlists the subjects representing his authority in the order of significance for imperial honor, he sends "two golden robes (*platna*) and his letter with *çavuş* Rezvan, *kapıcı*, and Thomas."[213] The grand vizier does not identify the envoys at all, requiring only that those who deliver the sultan's gifts and letter be treated in keeping with

[211] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d .4, ll. 104ob. – 112ob.
[212] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d .4, ll. 115-118.
[213] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d .4, l.108 ob.

the principles of "friendship" between the sovereigns. [214] Finally, the patriarch introduces Kantakouzenos and the envoys as "an honorable and distinguished nobleman Thomas with the sultan's people."[215]In fact, only Loukaris showed that Thomas was a head of the embassy and emphasized his high social status.

Upon closer examination of the documents on preparation of the mission and the official correspondence, we see that Loukaris brokered the alliance, but also appointed himself and Kantakouzenos intermediaries between the sovereigns.[216] Perhaps the sultan and the grand vizier were not so much concerned about the intricacies of Muscovite religio-political environment, but the anxiety about imperial prestige permeated Ottoman domestic and foreign projects. Loukaris was acutely aware of this, as seen from his letter to the tsar, and demonstrated his capacity to provide a balance between the Ottoman political needs and the maintenance of imperial dignity of the sultan. Mindful of this consciousness on the part of the Greek intermediaries, the next chapter will focus on how Kantakouzenos projected the Ottoman imperial authority in face-to-face encounter with the Muscovites.

The Embassy of Thomas Kantakouzenos

This section examines the role of mediation provided by the Christian Orthodox subject of the sultan, Thomas Kantakouzenos, in shaping the interaction between the Muscovite and Ottoman courts. It shows that by employing his religious and political identity in diplomatic representation of the sultan, he augmented the imperial prestige of both Muslim and Christian sovereigns. Thomas provided the sultan an opportunity to exploit the symbolic weapons of the Christian court to buttress his imperial authority and prevented the loss of prestige in

[214] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d .4, l. 111 ob. – 112.
[215] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d .4, l. 118.
[216] On self-appointed intermediaries in cross-confessional diplomacy, see Natividad Planas, "Diplomacy from Below or Cross-Confessional Loyalty? The "Christians of Algiers" between the Lord of Kuko and the King of Spain in the Early 1600s," in *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015), 153-73.

cross-confessional diplomacy, while confirming the sovereign status of the Muscovite patriarch by allocating the sultan's gift to him.

The embassy, which arrived at the border of Muscovy at the end of August 1621, was sent urgently from Istanbul and did not follow the established custom, according to which the Ottoman and Muscovite missions arrived together. As a result, it created tensions around the status of the embassy and the arrangement of the greeting ceremonies. The governor of Azov did not manage to inform the Cossacks about the incoming mission and Muscovites also did not expect the Ottoman guests. The ambassador, however, was accustomed to the local procedures as he had come with diplomatic and commercial missions to Muscovy during the Time of Troubles.[217] He sent a Russian captive who accompanied the ambassadorial group to the Cossacks to inform them about their arrival. Although the Cossacks did not have instructions from the tsar regarding the embassy, they treated them according to established precedent. The Muscovite official who happened to deliver tsar's *zhalovanie* to the Cossacks at this time, escorted the foreign guests to the border town of Voronezh together with 150 Cossacks and the ataman. In the meantime, the Muscovite court was informed about the arrival of the embassy and arranged a report for the tsar about the greeting ceremonies and provision granted to the previous Ottoman missions. After consulting the precedents, the tsar assigned two *pristavy*, Turkish and Greek interpreters to the envoys and issued orders pertaining to the allocation of food, transport and accommodation. On the ground, however, these orders were implemented with significant deviations because the *voevoda* had troubles with provisioning the foreign guests and even finding roads that would be proper for them. This poor economic situation caused by a long period of internal turmoil undermined the image of the wealthy Muscovite ruler, and the local governors emphasized that all provision came from them, not from the tsar.

[217] Tsakiris, "Cyril Loukaris'; [Floria] Флоря, "Фома Кантакузин"[Foma Kantakuzin]

Another challenge was the establishment of ranks within the embassy. Kantakouzenos stressed that he was sent by the sultan in the status of ambassador, while *çavuş* and *kapıcı* were not informed about the real aim of the mission.[218] Nevertheless, as evident from the *korm* records, on the way to Moscow, the Greek diplomat was allocated the same rank as chaush (*çavuş*). At the entrance to Moscow, he was greeted by the *pristavy*with *koroshevanie*similar to his Muslim companions.[219] The horses from the tsar's stables were also of the same type for Kantakouzenos, *çavuş* and *kapıcı.*[220] The Muscovites thus did not distinguish him from the Muslim members of the mission in terms of diplomatic status but also did not consider his confessional affiliation in arranging the diplomatic ceremonial. Yet the mixed menu of the tsar's bestowal of food and drink on the day of arrival offered the guests an opportunity to choose different dishes, among them those typically served during the fish days according to the Christian calendar. The *stol'nik* who delivered the *korm* to the ambassadorial residence was instructed to stay with the guests and to report to the court whether they were sitting at the table together and what they were eating.[221] Such doubts and anxieties of the court not only regarding the diplomatic rank of the Greeks in the service of the sultan – as it was typical of the first half of the sixteenth century, but also their Christianness – show how different the environment was in which the Ottoman subjects served as intermediaries in the seventeenth century.In diplomatic ritual, religious and political status had to be demonstrated through practices, and Kantakouzenos managed to prove that he was both at the same time, a Christian and the head of an Ottoman embassy only on his arrival in Moscow.

Three days later, the foreign guests were conveyed from their lodgings by the two *pristavy* and the *d'iak* to the audience with the sovereigns. The quality of horses, accorded

[218] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, l. 6ob.
[219] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, l. 71ob.
[220] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, l. 69ob.
[221] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, ll. 87-87ob.

with the ranks of the Ottoman representatives, confirmed Kantakouzenos' status as the head of the mission: he received a horse of the *argamak* breed, his brother, *çavuş* and *kapıcı* - stallions, and ten members of their entourage – horses of unspecified type with saddles and bridles of "fine quality."[222] A group of thirty riders and *strel'tsy* with diplomatic gifts came ahead of the ambassadorial procession. What is notable here is the inclusion of Kantakouzenos's brother into the group which was accorded with the status of the Muslim envoys. Given that neither Ottoman diplomatic documents nor Loukaris's letter mentioned him, it seems that Thomas managed to negotiate the allocation of graces to his brother Lavr, which was one of the key instruments of court politics. This seemingly minor episode provides us with a glimpse into the role that the Muscovite court assigned to Kantakouzenos in its relations with the Porte.

Upon reaching the tsar's treasury, *çavuş* and *kapıcı* dismounted and proceeded to the Golden Hall via the middle staircase, and Kantakouzenos alighted closer to the palace, at the second buttress of the treasury. From there, he did not go to the tsar's chamber, but to the far right corner of the square to pray in the Cathedral of Dormition (the Assumption Cathedral), the major Moscow's church, and the site of coronations and the seat of the patriarch of Moscow.[223] This move was a significant deviation from a standard practice and required that spatial and temporal structure of the ceremony was transformed by the Muscovite court to accommodate the Greek diplomat's demonstration of piety. Why was it essential for the Ottoman ambassador to emphasize his Orthodox Christian religious identity during the public procession to the palace? Muscovite ceremonial norms conditioned that representatives of Islamic states were not granted proximity to a sacred space of the Annunciation Cathedral and thus had to take a less honorable route to the tsar's chambers than Christians. The question is whether only Muscovite and European participants considered this stage of the

[222] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 91ob. – 92.
[223] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 92ob., 94.

procession as diminishing the imperial prestige of the sultan. It is precisely the actions of the Greek ambassador that help understand the role he appears to have assigned himself as an intermediary.

Kantakouzenos extracted the maximum symbolic profit from the Muscovites' recognition of his diplomatic and religious status as the head of the embassy and their coreligionist by choosing as a setting for his pious performance the seat of the Russian Orthodoxy and the imperial center, the cathedral where both Muscovite sovereigns, Mikhail Romanov and Filaret, were crowned. Without doubt, this choice secured him both a longer and more spectacular procession than other ambassadors had and the extension of the sultan's authority to the most "Christianized" imperial space of the Kremlin. As the head of the mission, Kantakouzenos, acted as "a rank-conscious and ritual-conscious" diplomat who perceived the situation as potentially threatening to the "symbolic power" of his sovereign and employed a symbolic tool of the host court to reinforce the sultan's position.[224]

What was the reaction of the Muscovite court to this? It is somewhat surprising that the *posol'skaia kniga* is silent about what seems to be a central issue here, i. e. whether Kantakouzenos eventually took the middle staircase, which, then, was either of no concern to the *d'iaki* in comparison to the fact that the Ottoman diplomat prayed in the Cathedral of Dormition or omitted because of its contradiction to the spatial logic of the ritual that divided "Muslims" from "Christians." In any case, it shows that both parties were conscious of the role of religion in ceremonial procedures that defined relations between the rulers. Kantakouzenos used a weapon of the Christian court to demonstrate a universal imperial power of the sultan that elevated him beyond the reach of other monarchs: he was a truly

[224] Peter Burschel, "A Clock for a Sultan: Diplomatic Gift-giving from an Intercultural Perspective," *The Medieval History Journal*, 16, 2 (2013): 552.

universal ruler in choosing the subjects and terms through which he projected his authority at other courts.

Upon his return, Kantakouzenos was met at the entrance to the Golden Hall by four Muscovite officials, a prince, *okol'nichii* and two *d'iaki*, who performed two "great" greetings and escorted him to the tsar's chamber.[225] The spatial arrangement of the audience demonstrated equal sovereign authority of the tsar and the head of the Orthodox Church by emphasizing symmetry in every detail of the rulers' representation. The objects and people in action all served this purpose. The tsar sat on his throne wearing a gold diadem and holding a crystal scepter set with gems. The sovereign patriarch sat to the right of the tsar in a black velvet seat wearing his ceremonial attire—a prelate's robe, which was the velvet habit with with hanging bands studded with jewels and a large *klobuk* (Orthodox monk's head covering) with sequins, precious stones and pearls.[226] The imperial attributes were also placed symmetrically and displayed by the two windows near the rulers: the golden orb on the tsar's left, and the life-giving cross on a golden dish on the patriarch's right. The boiars to the left of the tsar were counterbalanced by the metropolitans, archbishops, bishops and archimandrites who sat along the western wall to the right of Filaret. Such meticulous organization of a diplomatic audience shows a crucial role of ritual in articulating a new political order to domestic and foreign audiences.[227]

After the *okol'nichii* introduced the ambassadors to the tsar and the patriarch, the guests were allowed to greet the sovereigns. The presence of two rulers and mixed confessional composition of the Ottoman embassy required the complex choreography of the first face-to-face encounter between the participants. Kantakouzenos was the first to greet the

[225] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 94ob.
[226] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 93.
[227] Roosen, "Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach," *The Journal of Modern History* 52 (1980): 474; Brenda Bolton and Christina Meek eds., *Aspects of Authority in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2007), 2.

rulers, he kissed the tsar's hand and received the blessing from the patriarch. Then the other members of the group, the *çavuş, kapıcı* and the ambassador's brother, were permitted to approach the sovereigns, but only Lavr was allowed to kiss the tsar's hand and was blessed by the patriarch. The rulers' treatment of the Muslim representatives implied lesser proximity to them or even the absence of it: the tsar put his hand on the heads of *çavuş* and *kapıcı*, and Filaret did not greet them. This refined ritual set precedence among the members of the embassy, but also exposed them to the newly established ceremonial procedures which stipulated that their political standing at the Muscovite court was now defined vis-a-vis two sovereigns. Consequently, the Muslim diplomats' deprivation of the proximity to the patriarch meant that the Greek representative was the only possible candidate for approaching Filaret, a key decision-maker in the current Muscovite political environment.

After establishing the hierarchy between the hosts and the guests, the audience determined the rulers' relationships with the authorities whom the ambassador represented, that is, the sultan, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the grand vizier. At first, Kantakouzenos delivered a greeting from Osman II to the tsar and the patriarch, and they stood up to inquire about the sultan's health in recognition of his high political status.[228] The symmetrical movements of the Muscovite rulers informed the foreign diplomats that Filaret equated his own status not only with the tsar's, as was evident from the first greeting ceremony, but also with the sultan's, which reinforced his claim to sovereign authority. Yet the next ritual, presentation of Osman's messages, demonstrated that the Ottoman court did not confirm this claim as the ambassador had a letter only for the tsar, and "secret speeches" for the patriarch. After acting on behalf of Osman II, the ambassador greeted the Muscovite rulers from Patriarch Loukaris. He delivered the patriarch's bow and blessing to the tsar, and a bow to Filaret, and passed the letters from him to the *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak*. Loukaris's

[228] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 96-97ob.

salutations were received with lesser prestige: the tsar stayed seated when asking about his health and the patriarch rose slightly from his seat. These carefully calculated gestures established the precise relationships between the political and religious authorities of the sultan and Loukaris on the one hand and of Filaret on the other. The hierarchy between the sovereigns and grand vizier Hüseyin Pasha was expressed by ordering the *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak* toinquire about the vizier's health, which excluded him from the symbolical dialogue between the sovereigns. Finally, the same *d'iak* asked about the ambassador's health, and Kantakouzenos was allowed to sit on a bench, which was "the same as to the Polish ambassadors," denoting a standard level of proximity to the sovereigns.[229]

While the previous stages of the audience required mutual participation of hosts and guests, distribution of honors to the Muscovite rulers by the means of the sultanic gifts was a largely one-sided process. As the sultan's letter specified, his representatives were authorized to grant two robes of honor, *platna,* to the tsar. However, the *posol'skaia kniga* documents that the ambassador had three robes with him. After presenting the first two to the tsar, he offered the third robe to the patriarch. All three *platna* were received from the diplomat by the *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak* whichtestifies to the fact that the Muscovite court recognized them as the sultan's gifts despite the fact that the official correspondence had not provided any information regarding the gifts to Filaret.[230] Given that the sultan did not send his letter to him either, it seems that the Ottoman court provided the extra robe for the patriarch, but the sultan's prestige was secured by including the Greek ambassador as an additional link in the chain of transmission. From the Muscovite perspective, the acceptance of the patriarch's robe as a gift from the Ottoman ruler served as a confirmation of Filaret's sovereign authority. Therefore, a consensus regarding the status of the gift was achieved between the

[229] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 99; [Iuzefovich] Юзефович, *Как в посольских обычаях ведется* [According to the ambassadorial custom], 119.
[230] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 99-99ob.

parties as it aligned with their pragmatic goals and expectations. After Kantakouzenos distributed the robes among the sovereigns, he presented his personal gifts to the tsar, a sapphire and two textiles embroidered with gold.[231] These were received by the *d'iak* of the treasury, and the tsar demonstrated his grace to the diplomat by permitting him to sit for the second time. The *posol'skii dumnyi d'iak* informed Thomas that upon the translation of the correspondence he would be granted the audience with Filaret in the patriarch's palace.

The same day the members of the embassy received *korm* from the tsar, which Rowland has referred to as the "take-away" banquet, a sumptuous meal sent to the diplomat's residence.[232] The dietary norms of the second ceremonial feast were reoriented towards Christian members of the mission by including only fish dishes. It was comprised of three types of caviar; around thirty dishes of steamed, grilled, salted, boiled and pickled fish; more than a dozen kinds of fish and vegetable soups; the Orthodox "butter week" pastry and snacks; and drinks: seven buckets of French, German and Italian wine, and twenty five buckets of mead.[233]

Three days later, the ambassador and six members of the embassy were invited to the audience with Filaret, but the Muslim envoys had to stay in the diplomatic residence. The procession to the patriarch's palace, which was situated behind the Cathedral of Dormition, mirrored the ceremonial procedures of the procession to the Golden Hall, mapping out the hierarchy among the foreign guests spatially and choreographically. The members of the diplomat's retinue dismounted at the distance of seventy feet from the church, while Kantakouzenos alighted at the corner of it and went to the patriarch's residence. After passing through a corridor of *strel'tsy* and nobles, he had two greetings from the princes and *diaks* at the entrance to the vaulted Cross Chamber. Inside the chamber, the same *posol'skii diak* who

[231] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4,99ob.
[232] Rowland, "Architecture, Image, and Ritual", 69.
[233] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, 152ob. – 156ob.

acted on behalf of the tsar in the Golden Hall, introduced the ambassador to Filaret. The arrangement of the audience represented the patriarchal domain and the offices under Filaret's control. The head of the Church sat in his ceremonial attire surrounded by the metropolitan, archbishop, treasurers, hegumens, archimandrites, boiars and nobles. After the patriarch blessed Kantakouzenos, he allowed him to sit on a bench in the middle of the hall. The *posol'skii diak*announced that negotiations would be held in a smaller room adjacent to the chamber. Filaret proceeded towards the room and the *posol'skii diak* invited the diplomat to follow him after some delay.

At the private audience with Filaret, Kantakouzenos employed all possible means in convincing him to send the troops in support of the Ottoman campaign as soon as possible. The key argument he put forward was that the sultan would help the tsar to regain the territories lost during the Time of Troubles.[234] The patriarch, in turn, used the situation to negotiate the tsar's title, whom the sultan addressed as a king in his letter. The parties concluded that Filaret and the tsar would send their dispatches to Loukaris and the sultan with the *çavuş* informing them about their decision, while Kantakouzenos would return to Istanbul the next spring with the tsar's diplomats.

The audience in the Cross Chamber was followed by yet another ceremonial banquet, this time granted by Filaret. His bestowal of food also included only dishes that corresponded to the Christian calendar.[235] In two weeks after the negotiations, on the morning of October 7, Kantakouzenos and Muslim envoys attended the farewell audience arranged for the *çavuş* at which he received the letters to the sultan and Loukaris. In his correspondence with the sultan, the tsar confirmed that the Greek ambassador delivered his "secret speeches" to Filaret and thanked the sultan for the gifts of "friendship and brotherhood," the three robes, although

[234] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4, ll. 128-147ob.
[235] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4,156ob.-160.

not specifying that one of them was presented to the patriarch.[236] In such a way, the tsar attempted to define the status of people and objects that remained ambiguous in the sultan's letter: all three robes were recognized as the sovereign gifts, Kantakouzenos as the head of the mission, and Filaret as the sovereign ruler.

The further proceedings of the 1621 embassy are not entirely clear as a portion of the records documenting it was lost. The other sources inform us that the Muscovites soon learned about the Ottoman-Polish peace agreement concluded around the same time that the *çavuş* left Moscow, but the Greek diplomat persisted that the sultan was planning to continue the military campaign.[237] The tsar and Filaret, however, were reluctant to break the truce with the Polish king, which had been obtained at tremendous costs for Muscovy.

The alignment of religious and political spheres in the Muscovite governance had concrete implications for the conduct of diplomacy. In a situation when the access to the Muscovite sovereign depended on the confessional rather than political status of the ambassador, Ottoman Muslim and Christian diplomats could not be equally successful in facilitating the transfer of information between the rulers. The confessional boundaries, fixed by the Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial spatially, excluded the Muslim envoys from negotiations with the sovereign patriarch. Consequently, only Kantakouzenos was capable of delivering the sultan's "real message" to the decision-maker. Taking into consideration the urgency of the mission and its potential significance for the Hotin campaign, the Christan ambassador had a critical role in the execution of Ottoman foreign policy and was more efficient in the Muscovite context than the Muslim diplomatic dignitaries.

[236] RGADA, f.89, op.1, d.4,178, 183.
[237] *Дворцовые разряды* [Court registers] (St. Petersburg, 1850)Vol.1, stb. 495; *Книги разрядные* [Register books] (St. Petersburg, 1853) vol.1 stb.829.

This contrast in also evident in the diplomats' different capacity to communicate the sultan's imperial authority to the Christian sovereigns. First of all, because the distribution of the sovereign's graces in Moscow was unequal among Christians and Muslims. Both the tsar and the patriarch expressed their favor primarily to their coreligionists, and as Kantakouzenos was the head of the mission, he received the greatest honor. This prestige was doubled by the symbolic and material signs of deference from the patriarch, which he showed only to Christians. Therefore, Kantakouzenos gained the symbolic profit benefiting the sultan's image which the Muslim envoys could not reap in these conditions.

In all these ways, it was the simultaneous participation of the Muslim and Christian diplomats in the mission that made Thomas's contribution more explicit. However, he was not only held in the highest esteem in Moscow but also demonstrated his own commitment to buttressing the sultan's imperial status by urging the Muscovites to modify the procedures of the solemn procession to the palace. Kantakouzenos exploited his religious status at this public stage of ceremonial to eliminate the ambiguity which was inscribed in ritual and potentially threatened the sultan's prestige. The Christian diplomat thus provided the sultan with an opportunity to cite the symbolic weapon of the Christian court and to fashion himself as a universal ruler.

The role of Kantakouzenos in sultanic image-making might be compared to the contributions of other intermediaries in cross-confessional diplomacy who reinforced the Ottoman imperial authority at the time when it was challenged both at home and abroad.[238] Operating at the imperial frontiers or at its heartland, providing their mediation to the Ottomans consciously or not, they all constructed their "trans-imperial trajectories" in the

[238] Krstić, "The Elusive Intermediaries: Moriscos in Ottoman and Western European Diplomatic Sources from Constantinople, 1570s-1630s," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 129-151; idem, "Contesting Subjecthood and Sovereignty in Ottoman Galata in the Age of Confessionalization: The Carazo Affair, 1613-1617," *Oriento Moderno* 93 (2013): 422-53.

atmosphere of heightened imperial and confessional polarization.[239] In this context, the mobilization of both the diplomat's religious affiliation and the political authority of the sultan was essential for Thomas not only for acting effectively on behalf of Osman II but also in his attempts to position himself as an intermediary at the Muscovite court. In his negotiations with Filaret, he emphasized the importance of the relationship between his religious and political affiliations stating that the sultan sent him to Moscow because the Greek ambassador was a coreligionist of the Muscovite rulers which implied trust between them.[240] Appealing to the significance that the sultan allegedly ascribed to his religious solidarity with the tsar and the patriarch, Kantakouzenos fashioned himself as holding a unique position in relations between the sovereigns.

While the trans-imperial subjects in the Mediterranean were operating in the sphere of legal systems and practices, Kantakouzenos's "particular modality of mediation"[241] was enshrined in one of the major sources of tension in Muscovite-Ottoman diplomacy – the imperial prestige of the rulers expressed through material culture. For the Greek ambassador, the mutual necessity of both courts for a proxy, ensuring the symbolic translation of commodities into sovereign gifts, provided one of the most important means to maintain his diplomatic career and to secure his position at Moscow and Istanbul.[242] His strategy was similar to that of other creatures of court societies, who served the rulers in person, organized the representation of dynastic power and attempted to solidify their position by intervening in the distribution of nominations, rewards and honors.[243]

[239] Van Gelder and Krstić, "Cross-Confessional Diplomacy," 99.
[240] RGADA, f. 89, op.1, d.4, 1.30.
[241] Rothman, "Afterword: Intermediaries, Mediation, and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19 (2015): 245.
[242] On translation in the context of material culture, see Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).
[243] Norbert Elias, *Court Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 92-114; Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300–1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 291.

But in the context of inter-imperial diplomacy, the Greek diplomat was involved in prestige politics of two dynastic courts, which enmeshed him and the sovereigns in a different chain of interdependencies. While the sultan kept him in a state of "personal servant," he also depended on Kantakouzenos in his pursuit of imperial prestige in diplomatic relations with Christian sovereigns, which is evident from the reluctance of the Ottoman court to confirm the sovereign status of Filaret. The tsar's desire to express his sovereign authority and to elevate his status on the geopolitical stage through the claim to equality with the sultan resulted in a tremendous role of the sultanic gifts in the tsar's self-fashioning. If we acknowledge the agency of objects in shaping identity, the imperial identity of the tsars was then constructed to a large degree by the sovereign gifts from the sultans and other Muslim rulers.[244] Therefore, the diplomat was constitutive of the positions of the tsar and the sultan, highlighting the pinnacle of their place in the hierarchy of universal monarchs. The contribution of Kantakouzenos to both imperial projects raises the issue of political loyalty in cross-confessional diplomacy. However, as Natividad Planas reminds us, it is more fruitful to think in terms of different models of cross-confessional loyalty rather than assume that religious affiliation conditioned political loyalty.[245]

[244] Erin K. Lichtenstein,"Identities Through Things: A Comment," in *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York : Routledge, 2013), 375-80. On the sultan's gifts to the tsars, see А.К. Левыкин[A.K. Levykin], *The Tsars and the East: Gifts from Turkey and Iran in the Moscow Kremlin*(Lonon: Thames & Hudson, 2009); ed. Mark Sutcliffe and A.K. Levykin, *Treasures of the Czars* (London: Booth-Clibbord Editions, 1995); Nurhan Atasoy and Lale Uluc, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture in Europe: 1453-1699*, (Istanbul: Armaggan Publications, 2012).
[245] Natividad Planas, "Diplomacy from Below", 153.

Conclusion

The dialogue between the studies of empire and diplomatic ritual with the focus on the Ottoman Empire and Muscovy provides an alternative to the dominant Christian West and the Muslim East discourse and encourages us to move beyond the various implicit or explicit binary schemes such as norm-deviation. This approach is useful to contest the notion of "catching up with the West" and to unveil the complexity of interactions between the empires with their multiple and interactive pasts.

By examining the Muscovite self-fashioning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries I demonstrated that Western Europe was not the only source of models for it. The Ottoman sultan's imperial authority was playing no less central role in the tsar's image-making as both the Orthodox emperor and "the white tsar." Muscovy's strategy of selective "bricolage" of practices and symbols was similar to that of other empires which modified the imperial borrowings to embed them in new cultural contexts.[246] A broader perspective on Muscovy's imperial expansion shows that it unfolded simultaneously with the increased imperial and confessional polarization in Europe and the Middle East between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries which enhanced the tsar's standing in the international arena and in the hierarchy of Christian sovereigns.

The pitfalls of taking into consideration only "Western connection" are becoming more explicit in the context of different European interpretations of Muscovite and Ottoman "barbarity." The fact that the "outsider" Muscovite court became a setting for a discourse that opposed it to yet another non-Western power, the Ottomans, shows that the boundaries that divided "civilization" from "barbarity," and consequently (in)commensurability, were

[246] For the notion of bricolage in state-building formation see Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), 121; Stoler, "Considerations on Imperial Comparisons," 45.

redrawn through their interpretations that fitted a particular imperial narrative. To quote Ann Stoler, "by extending the forms to which we look, it becomes increasingly clear that overt comparison and claims to exceptionalism went hand in hand."[247] While the Ottomans were engaged in a rivalry with the Habsburgs and Safavids, Muscovy was a "searcher for comparison and exceptionalism" with Poland-Lithuania and the Crimean khanate. Due to the global religio-political discourse, the Muscovite court ritual, aimed primarily at Tatar Muslims, came to manifest a binary of Islamdom and Christendom, which resulted in presenting the Ottoman ambassadors as inferior actors at the Muscovite court. However, this European interpretation contradicted the logic of ceremonial that assessed the participants of encounter according to their political rather than religious status. The tsars were claiming "brotherly equality" with the sultans and attempted to demonstrate their equal imperial rank through diplomatic ritual and correspondence.

The focus on the Ottoman Greeks' mediation between the empires is crucial for understanding wider early modern religious and political dynamics and the various facets of Muscovite-Ottoman entanglements. The case studies of the embassies led by the Crimean Greek diplomats Kamal and Iskender in the first half of the sixteenth century show a great role of the Ottoman imperial authority for the grand duke, which rendered the intermediaries capable of manipulating the Muscovites' political aspirations. At this period, the Ottoman diplomats followed the same ceremonial procedures as representatives of Christian states. Throughout the ambassador's stay in Muscovy, the hierarchies were constructed through universal symbolic language that was not oriented towards confessional belongings of the diplomat and was shaped to a large degree by the material culture. These embassies are also instructive about the place of the Christian converts in Ottoman diplomacy.

[247] Stoler, "Considerations on Imperial Comparisons," 45.

The Muscovite records of the 1621 embassy of Thomas Kantakouzenos provide evidence about the experience of the Ottoman Greek community for its lesser known period - between the high prominence of archons, the Greek notables of the sixteenth century, and the Phanariots who emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century.[248] In the light of Muscovite archival accounts, the Ottoman diplomat and the Patriarch of Constantinople occupy a central place in diplomatic relations with the Porte; they are actors with their own agendas and tools to enforce them at both imperial courts. Although the services that the Greeks provided to the Ottoman court clustered around trade and foreign relations, the sixteenth-century environment in both the Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe was very different from the 1620s, as well as the tasks that the Greek diplomats performed for the Porte. The fact that the mission of Kantakouzenos was a product of the mutually beneficial cooperation between the Ottoman court and the Ecumenical Patriarchate challenges the narrative of Christian alienation from the Ottoman Empire. The Church was able to extract from the Ottoman authorities the support of its anti-Latin project, while the court profited from the networks of the patriarch in Muscovy and the Greeks' diplomatic mediation.

In the context of the face-to-face encounter between the Muscovite sovereigns and Kantakouzenos, the impact of his mediation became more visible as the political regime of dyarchy created a greater ceremonial division between the ambassadors according to their religious status. In this situation, the Ottoman Christian intermediary was instrumental in buttressing the sultan's prestige by the symbolic means of a Christian court.

While the role of religion in structuring diplomacy was contingent on multiple factors, the struggle over imperial prestige was the enduring feature of diplomatic communication, which determined a particular form of the diplomat's mediation – the regulation of imperial prestige of both sovereigns by the means of the sultan's gifts.

[248] Greene, *Edinburgh History of the Greeks*, 114.

This thesis dealt with a largely unexplored topic of Muscovite-Ottoman imperial entanglements and highlighted both global and local factors that shaped the interactions between the empires by approaching them through the lens of diplomatic ceremonial. This approach allowed to discern the exchanges between the empires in the sovereign's image-making and the impact that the sultan's authority had on the tsar's representation within Christian and Muslim hierarchies of rulers. It also demonstrated that although both discourses and practices shaped the symbolic communication, it is of crucial importance to distinguish between them as they reveal different patterns, as in the case of the ritual that divided diplomats into "Muslims" and "Christians" and the actual treatment of the diplomats. These findings show that very different facets of exchanges between Muslim and Christian polities come into surface once one takes a non-Western perspective on them.

Apart from the studies of empire and diplomatic ritual, this work is of value for the scholarship on Christian community in the Ottoman Empire and mediation in cross-confessional diplomacy. The same approach, focusing on diplomatic practice, was useful in understanding the roles of Kantakouzenos and Loukaris in shaping the interaction between the empires. While the actions of the Ottoman Greek intermediaries were context-specific they revealed broader processes of early modern diplomacy, such as the modalities of mediation that were relevant for the participants of inter-imperial encounters and how they attained meaning through the process of mediation and negotiation.

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